

HELPING THE RICH

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1920

JAMES BAY





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HELPING THE RICH
A PLAY

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A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

JAMES BAY

pseud.
Clark, James Bayard



BRENTANO'S

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HELPING THE RICH

CHARACTERS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

MRS. FOSTER, *Mr. Storm's Housekeeper*

MR. PETER STORM

MISS JUDITH MILLER MONROE

DR. ROBERT BRENT, *Dispensary Doctor*

MRS. MONROE

MR. WILLIAM T. MONROE

WINTERS, *the Butler*

DR. CLEAVER, *Attending Surgeon, St. Stephen's
Hospital*

DR. TALBERT, *Attending Physician, St. Stephen's
Hospital*

PATRICK FAGAN, *Registrar of Dispensary*

MISS DALY, *Dispensary Nurse*

MAMIE MURRAY

ANGELINA KITCHEN

HENRY SMITH

FIRST WOMAN

SECOND WOMAN

HERMANN KLEIN

FRANK ALLEN

} *Patients in Dispensary*

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ACT I

SCENE. — PETER STORM'S *library*.

TIME. — *A Tuesday morning, shortly before the United States entered into the war.*

A rather large room with a studious atmosphere, which is furnished simply but in good taste. To the left of the centre of the room is a large table desk littered with manuscripts, letters, etc. The desk chair is placed so that the occupant faces the right of the room, where there is a door leading to the entrance hall. Behind the desk in the left wall are double doors which lead to the sitting room beyond. At the back of the room, in the centre, there is a broad window through which the morning light is shining. To the right of this and in the corner of the room is an open fireplace, before which are several chairs. To the left of the window, the wall is covered with a large book-case, before which is a small step-ladder and a secretary's desk and chair. MRS. FOSTER, PETER STORM'S housekeeper, a motherly old woman, rather wrinkled and bent, but still full of energy, is dusting and straightening things, as PETER STORM comes into the room. He is a well-built man, about thirty-five. There is that about the clean-cut features which though distinctive is difficult to define.

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His eyes have an unusual holding character, and about them there is something which suggests that the amusing side of any situation is seldom lost.

MRS. FOSTER. She's out there [*pointing to the ball*] — the young woman — waitin' to see you, Mr. Peter.

PETER. Waiting to see *me*? What young woman?

MRS. FOSTER. Said she was answerin' your advertisement.

PETER. Oh! yes, of course. I'd forgotten it was this morning.

MRS. FOSTER. She's young and strong lookin'.

PETER [*sitting down at his desk and commencing to look over his mail, suppressing a smile*]. That's good.

MRS. FOSTER [*with a little tremble in her voice*]. I guess she'll do very well for you, Mr. Peter.

PETER [*apparently not noticing her anxiety, laughs with amused surprise as he cuts open the letters*]. You think she will, eh?

MRS. FOSTER. I suppose I'm not so useful as I once was.

PETER [*looking up with assumed concern*]. Not so useful, not so useful? What in the world are you going on about, Fossie?

MRS. FOSTER [*looking off in the distance*]. I 'tended you when you were a baby, and after — when you were a little fellow — after your father and mother — God rest 'em — were taken.

PETER. Yes, I know you did. I remember how you used to wash my face and hands for me.

MRS. FOSTER. But if you are getting somebody

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else [*pointing to the ball*] you'll not be needing me any longer, I suppose.

PETER [*going on with his mail*]. Certainly not to wash my face and hands for me.

MRS. FOSTER. I'm not complainin', Master Peter.

PETER [*laughing*]. Bless your soul, Fossie! that young woman out there is applying for a position as secretary — somebody to lick postage stamps — to throw advertisements in the wastepaper basket — and do that sort of work.

MRS. FOSTER [*questioningly and with something very like tears in her wrinkled old eyes*]. Not to 'tend you, then — Not to look out for keepin' house?

PETER [*quietly going over to her and putting his arm tenderly around her stooping shoulders*]. Why, Fossie, my dear old Fossie, never you get any such ideas into your head again. Why, I couldn't get along at all, unless I had you to boss me around at home, and you very well know it — so go along with you, now, and ask her to come in. [*After she wipes her eyes with the back of her hand and they both have a little laugh, she goes out as PETER again sits down at his desk and is soon lost in the interest of his letters, which he continues to open and read. MRS. FOSTER returns, bringing the young woman, who is dressed in a street costume and is carrying in her hand a newspaper which she consults as she enters. She is about twenty-four or twenty-five, with a lovely warm coloring and rather loose, wavy hair, all of which is heightened in effect by the simplicity of her dress.*]

THE YOUNG WOMAN [*with a diffident smile to MRS. FOSTER*]. This is "Mr. P. S." who advertised for a secretary?

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MRS. FOSTER. Yes, that's Mr. Peter Storm — he's sitting at his desk over there, Miss.

[*The young woman gives a visible start on hearing the name — looks up — then hesitates, as though undecided whether to flee or advance.*]

MRS. FOSTER. Oh, you may go right up to him, Miss! He's expectin' you.

THE YOUNG WOMAN [*advancing with some hesitation, as MRS. FOSTER withdraws*]. You — you advertised for a secretary, I believe.

PETER [*looking up, then rising and placing a chair beside his desk*]. Yes, will you sit down, please?

THE YOUNG WOMAN [*sitting*]. Thank you.

PETER [*looks at her for a moment*]. You have come to apply for that position?

THE YOUNG WOMAN [*rather weakly*]. Yes.

PETER [*picking up a pencil and drawing a piece of paper toward him*]. May I ask your name?

THE YOUNG WOMAN. Miss — Miss Miller.

PETER [*about to write, sits looking at his pencil*]. Your other name, please.

THE YOUNG WOMAN [*starts violently — hesitates a moment*]. Oh! Oh, yes! Judith Miller.

PETER [*writes*]. Judith — ah — ah — Miller [*looking up*]. What experience in this work have you had, Miss Miller?

JUDITH. None as yet — but — but — I can manage the typewriter, and I've studied shorthand.

PETER [*writes*]. Typewriter — shorthand.

JUDITH [*with more courage*]. And I know French and a little Italian.

PETER. That's very good.

[*The bell rings. MRS. FOSTER comes in.*]

MRS. FOSTER. There's another young lady.

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PETER. Ask her to sit down, please. [*Then, to JUDITH*] I'm finishing a book and I need some one to help me get it ready for the publishers.

JUDITH. Oh, how interesting!

PETER. It may be rather shocking.

JUDITH. I didn't know society could be shocked in these days.

PETER [*with a hearty laugh*]. Oh, my, yes!

JUDITH. How?

PETER. By publishing the actual birth rate of its good deeds.

[*The bell rings, just as JUDITH, looking up in surprise, is about to speak.*]

MRS. FOSTER [*coming into the room*]. Another young lady.

PETER [*as if repeating a formula*]. Have her sit down, please. [*To JUDITH*]. Here is the manuscript [*drawing a stack of loose sheets toward him*]. It really didn't take very long to get all the facts and figures together of our present society's virtues.

JUDITH. May I see it?

PETER [*handing it over*]. Oh, certainly.

JUDITH [*taking it and reading*]. What a wonderful title! [*Then, looking inside and reading at the head of the chapter*] "The Parallel Growth of Private Charity and Pauperism." Is it really possible that our Charities actually *make* paupers? Why — why, that's a dreadful thought.

PETER [*smiling*]. It might be, of course, if the poor themselves found it out.

JUDITH. But there are so many charities?

PETER. So much the more interesting when they finally uncover our game.

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JUDITH. But if Charity was well organized?

PETER [*laughing*]. It *is* well organized, well advertised, and does away with any unpleasant contact between one class and another.

MRS. FOSTER [*entering*]. Well, I just come in to tell you there's seven or eight more of those secretary ladies out in the hall.

PETER [*indifferently*]. Have them sit down.

MRS. FOSTER. Can't — there's no room. Besides, I told them there was no use o' their waitin'.

PETER. You told them that, did you?

MRS. FOSTER. Yes, certainly. I told them you'd keep the young lady that was in here with you.

PETER. You did, did you [*laughing*]. Then you'd better go and send the others away.

MRS. FOSTER. What'll I say to 'em?

PETER. Tell them I'm suited — I mean, that you're suited and then come back and show Miss Miller where she can hang her things.

JUDITH [*leaning forward*]. Then I may have the position — may really go to work?

PETER. It's all settled. Didn't you hear Fossie engage you?

JUDITH. Oh, I'm so glad! But ——

PETER. But what?

JUDITH. It's so awful!

PETER. What's so awful?

JUDITH. Is there really no such thing as Christian charity any more?

PETER [*with a laugh*]. Certainly not. It's efficiency now. Can't you see Christianity and brotherly love are no longer suited to our large cities?

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MRS. FOSTER [*who has just come in, addresses* JUDITH]. If you will come with me, I'll show you where you can put your things.

[*She leads her off through the doors into the sitting room. PETER wanders to the mantelpiece, and taking a photograph of an ocean steamer in his hand, becomes lost in thought.*]

JUDITH [*presently returning, hesitates for a moment to disturb his thoughts*]. Shall I begin my work?

PETER [*putting the picture back, rather hurriedly*]. Yes, certainly — of course — We will begin right away. This will be your special province — Miss Miller — this desk, here [*leading her to the small desk beside his own*].

JUDITH. Oh, think of it!

PETER [*in a business like way*]. You may start right in by sorting the sheets of this manuscript and getting them in order, before we make a final copy.

JUDITH [*taking the papers to the desk and sitting down*]. Shall I number the pages a little more plainly? You can hardly read some of them.

PETER. Yes, if you will please. Now I shall have to run out for a little while. My publishers wish to see me, but I shall be back shortly. If any one should call, and the matter seems important, keep him.

JUDITH. I shall remember.

PETER [*his hand on the door and looking back*]. It is just possible that a Dr. Talbert of St. Stephen's Hospital may call.

JUDITH [*as the door closes, exclaims*]. Oh, I hope not!

PETER [*opening the door again and putting his head in*]. Or an old gentleman by the name of Monroe may drop in.

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JUDITH [*as he closes the door again, exclaims in fear*]. Oh! Oh! [*then with a tragic little laugh*]. How awful!

MRS. FOSTER [*coming in from sitting room*]. Where's Mr. Peter? [*as she goes over to the fireplace and makes ready to polish the brass*].

JUDITH [*looking very glum*]. Gone out for a short time.

MRS. FOSTER [*looking over to JUDITH*]. You don't like this work of bein' secretary, Miss?

JUDITH [*with a comical smile*]. Oh, yes, I do, very much.

MRS. FOSTER [*as she goes on with her work*]. Well, you've certainly made a great hit with Mr. Peter to start with.

JUDITH [*with interest*]. Do you think so, I thought he said you engaged me?

MRS. FOSTER. Don't I know him, Miss? Why, I've been takin' care of him 'most his whole life.

JUDITH. You have?

MRS. FOSTER. Except, of course, when he goes away for studyin', so as to write somethin'.

JUDITH. Does he go often?

MRS. FOSTER. Often enough. Once he was gone 'most three years.

JUDITH. That's a long time. When was that?

MRS. FOSTER. Near nine years now. There's the steamer he went off on [*pointing to a picture on the mantelpiece*]. The *Ionia* is the name of her.

JUDITH. Yes, I know her. She's a big ship.

MRS. FOSTER. You know her? You must tell Mr. Peter that. He's most interested in that picture there.

JUDITH. I could tell you about a girl who crossed

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on her once [*a starry look comes into her eyes as she speaks*]. It was years ago, now. She was sixteen then — going over to a school in Switzerland.

MRS. FOSTER [*looking up with interest*]. Now, you don't say?

JUDITH. Just this girl and her governess.

MRS. FOSTER. Well, well!

JUDITH. Such interesting people she met.

MRS. FOSTER [*polishing*]. Do tell!

JUDITH [*dreamily*]. But there was one, in particular.

MRS. FOSTER [*leading her on*]. Was there now?

JUDITH. One day he played shuffle board with her.

MRS. FOSTER. In the dinin' saloon, I s'pose.

JUDITH. No! On *deck*, of course.

MRS. FOSTER. Just fancy that, now.

JUDITH. Then after that, he asked her to promenade.

MRS. FOSTER [*puzzled*]. To what.

JUDITH. Walk with him — just him — every day.

MRS. FOSTER. My! My!

JUDITH. Sometimes he was very lively, and at other times *so* serious.

MRS. FOSTER [*knowingly nodding her head*]. The motion of the vessel, I s'pose.

JUDITH [*oblivious*]. She liked him best, though, when he was serious, — and *such* talks as they did have.

MRS. FOSTER. Talks?

JUDITH. About everything — Oh, so interesting!

MRS. FOSTER. Think of that!

JUDITH. Sometimes they would sit for hours in

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the sun and let it dry the salt spray on them while she listened — and sometimes — [*the door bell rings bringing them both suddenly back to the reality of the moment*].

MRS. FOSTER [*jumping up*]. Oh! dear! Now, who can that be?

JUDITH [*starting to her feet also as MRS. FOSTER goes to the door*]. Perhaps I had better take my work to the other? [*looking toward the room beyond*].

MRS. FOSTER. Not a bit of it, Miss, not a bit of it, — don't disturb yourself. [*As she goes in response to the bell JUDITH bends her head over her work to hide herself as much as possible, and is apparently very busy when the door opens and MRS. FOSTER leads a gentleman into the room. He is in the uniform of a medical officer of the army, — a young man, twenty-seven or -eight, — tall, dark complexion, manly, straightforward; yet in his sensitive features there is a strange mingling of purpose and futility.*]

MRS. FOSTER [*as she withdraws, and JUDITH with bent head, keeps on working*]. Will you wait here, sir, please.

HE [*looking in JUDITH's direction*]. How soon do you think Mr. Storm will return? My name is Dr. Brent, and I should like very much to see him.

JUDITH [*relieved at hearing a strange voice, looks up*]. Mr. Storm said he would be out only a short time. Won't you be seated? [*goes to work again*].

DR. BRENT [*in a matter of fact tone*]. Thank you, Miss Monroe.

JUDITH [*looks up in utter amazement*]. How do you know my name?

DR. BRENT. Seen you often enough in your

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father's car, when he's been coming to the hospital — St. Stephen's, where he's President of the Board.

JUDITH. You have! [*then looking at him more intently*]. Oh! I think I recognize you too, now. You used to work in the dispensary there. Didn't you?

DR. BRENT. I still work there.

JUDITH. But the uniform.

DR. BRENT. Oh, I'm on my way to a drill some of us doctors are having.

JUDITH. Do you really think this country is going to get in the war at last?

DR. BRENT. Nobody knows for certain; so we're just drilling up a bit, you see.

JUDITH [*after a short pause*]. Excuse me, but are you a friend of Mr. Storm's?

DR. BRENT [*warmly*]. I should say so. He and I were at school together. Why he was the hero of the school and the best friend of all the younger boys, and I was the youngest.

JUDITH [*with a laugh*]. Oh, I'm so glad to hear that you and he are friends.

DR. BRENT [*concerned*]. He isn't in any trouble, is he?

JUDITH. No, it is for myself. I'm in a terrible mess and I want you to help me, if you will.

DR. BRENT [*politely*]. I shall be most glad if I can be of any help.

JUDITH [*with a funny little smile*]. Well, you see my father and mother don't know that I'm a working girl now, and I mean to get a good start before they do. I got this place through an "ad" in the paper.

DR. BRENT. You may depend upon me, I sha'n't mention it, Miss Monroe.

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JUDITH [*excitedly*]. Oh! Oh! Oh! but you mustn't call me Miss Monroe.

DR. BRENT. Oh, I'm sorry, but I don't think I know you well enough to — to — [*a bell is heard to ring which brings JUDITH to her feet*].

JUDITH [*peering across the room as if in contemplated flight*]. Who can that be?

DR. BRENT. Sounded like a telephone bell.

JUDITH [*as she sinks into the seat again*]. I'm all on edge.

MRS. FOSTER [*entering and addressing JUDITH*]. There's some one on the telephone for Mr. Peter. Can you tell me where he can be gotten?

JUDITH. He is probably on his way here by now.

MRS. FOSTER [*as she withdraws*]. Thank you, Miss Miller, I'll tell 'em.

DR. BRENT [*raising his eyebrows*]. Miss Miller?

JUDITH. Yes, if you please — Judith Miller Monroe is my name — so Miss Miller, if you please. If Mr. Storm knew that I was the rich Miss Monroe he — [*with the rippling laugh which was one of her greatest charms*] he might not want to pay my wages.

DR. BRENT. He — He —

JUDITH [*quickly*]. I know what you are thinking. That he might not think that I was worth any. I know that most people believe that when a girl's rich, she can't really be in earnest about anything that counts.

DR. BRENT [*smiling*]. Well, I guess most of 'em are only educated for the parlor floor, and that's not much use when the cook leaves; but it's not generally the girl's fault, I'll say that.

JUDITH. Thank you for that last, Dr. Brent.

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DR. BRENT. And so you are going to try it on your own now?

JUDITH [*laughing again*]. If not captured, I am. But I must go to work. There are some books over there.

DR. BRENT [*taking the hint, sits down with a book*]. Thank you.

JUDITH [*after a moment's pause, continuing her work*]. You'll not say anything?

DR. BRENT. Certainly not, Miss Mon — Miss Miller.

[*PETER bursts into the room catching sight of his visitor as he enters.*]

PETER. Hello, Bobby Brent — My dear boy, and reading one of my own books, upside down too. You probably thought it was written that way — that's what most people think — well any way, I'm mighty glad to see you.

[*JUDITH takes her work and quietly withdraws to the sitting room.*]

DR. BRENT [*as he jumps up to meet PETER coming across to him with hands outstretched*]. Peter, — my old friend Peter, how are you after all these years?

PETER. Never better. Come, let's sit down.

DR. BRENT [*as they sit*]. You know, Peter, I had an awful shock not long ago. I thought you were dead.

PETER. The deuce you did. That was a cheery thought.

DR. BRENT. Saw your name in the papers. "Peter Storm dead" it said in big print. And then I saw it wasn't you after all, but that old Storm who had such a wad of wealth and lived in that old

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castle like house on Fifth Avenue. He wasn't any relative of yours, was he Peter?

PETER. Uncle, that's all.

DR. BRENT. You don't say so?

PETER. My father's oldest brother.

DR. BRENT. So you've come in for some of the big estate?

PETER. I happen to be the only heir.

DR. BRENT. You don't mean to say so? Why the papers said he was worth *millions*.

PETER. In a way, the papers were right, as they sometimes are.

DR. BRENT. What do you mean?

PETER. He *was* worth millions at one time, I believe.

DR. BRENT. But not at his death?

PETER. Nor for some years, but this was not generally known. The fact is, it was a conceit of the old gentleman's that it should *not* be known, — so he kept the show up until the cash went. Then he went.

DR. BRENT. And he left you nothing?

PETER [*laughing*]. Maybe enough to buy cigars with. I don't smoke much.

DR. BRENT. I say, that *is* hard luck.

PETER. On the contrary, it's becoming very amusing. In fact it's providing me with more fun than I ever thought a legacy capable of.

DR. BRENT [*looking blank*]. Amusing? Fun?

PETER. Exactly. I have now become — it seems — the centre — I may say, the very bull's eye for all the high class philanthropic archery in the city. My popularity as a possible incubator for the indigent has become positively enormous.

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DR. BRENT. Why, Peter, how can you make so light of charity?

PETER. Light of charity? Don't think it. Why, as a matter of fact, I'm very much interested in the subject of charity, and all our great philanthropists too! I have reason to be.

DR. BRENT. Reason to be?

PETER. I think so! One of 'em finished off my father before I was ten! That started me thinking on the ways of our philanthropy.

DR. BRENT. I don't understand.

PETER. Naturally, most doctors are on the profitable side of alms giving, and don't want to understand.

DR. BRENT. You think that I — ?

PETER. No, Bobby, not for a moment, if you're in the net, it's because you don't see its meshes.

DR. BRENT. But your father — How did it happen?

PETER. Well, if I put the story in a nut shell, maybe you'll see the worm. Here it is. My father had built up a business in the Middle West, and was doing well. Out of a clear sky 'long came one of those big trusts which feed on small enterprises, came along with its offer to absorb his business — or smash it. He put up a fight, but they crashed him.

DR. BRENT [*slowly*]. Ruined him?

PETER. Yes, but that's an old story. It's not the worm. The thing broke his faith and broke his health. An infection that was going the rounds got him, and he became seriously ill. To save his life, they said he should be taken to the hospital. There was only the one hospital there, and when he dis-

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covered that it was the man who had crumpled up his life and happiness, who was supporting the hospital — offering aid in the name of Christianity, to the poor, because it was considered good business policy, he refused to be taken there.

DR. BRENT [*intently*]. And so?

PETER. Yes, and so he died. My mother followed shortly after, leaving me with the faithful old nurse, who opened the door for you today.

DR. BRENT [*visibly stirred*]. Is he alive still — that man — the head of the big trust?

PETER [*slowly*]. I don't know. [*Silence in which his eyes wander off in thought. Then turning suddenly.*] It was the system, Bobby, that this man represented, which brought out this personal story; the vicious system which helps to numb the character and suck the blood of self-respect, and to break down the spirit of self-support of the poor devils who are led to believe that they are actually getting something for nothing in these free for all hospitals. That's the worm which lies in the nut, Bobby!

DR. BRENT. But, Peter, if we are not going to have these hospitals, what in the world is to take their place?

PETER. Give the people hospitals which are supported on the merits of medicine and surgery, and make them accessible to all people of all classes. If such institutions can't support themselves, then the doctoring art isn't worth a damn.

DR. BRENT [*questioning*]. You would make no provision for those who cannot pay?

PETER. Look here, Bobby, don't you know that poverty is a crime? It's society's crime! That's

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no longer a secret; and that in it we breed the anarchists, the Bolsheviks, the idle and the ill!

DR. BRENT [*persisting*]. Mustn't we have hospitals for them?

PETER. Isn't it up to the state to provide all of these so-called free institutions; and isn't it up to the citizens, the tax payers, to see that they elect the kind of officials who will take good and humane care of the poor we produce, or import from Russia, and also to work toward the prevention of this class?

DR. BRENT [*with enthusiasm*]. By Jove, Peter, that would not only reduce the sick list, but cut out most of the dependents and trouble makers as well. Now I wonder that some doctor hasn't thought of that.

PETER [*laughing*]. It is funny that some doctor hasn't thought of it.

DR. BRENT [*nettled*]. What the deuce are you laughing at any way?

PETER. Why, Bobby, my boy, I was only joking. Didn't you know that supporting a hospital and spearing paupers for it is considered our most reputable national sport? Don't it show our big American heart? Can you find me an elderly man of wealth who will not tell you that next to his game of golf it's his most refreshing pastime?

DR. BRENT [*after a moment's reflection*]. I guess perhaps we doctors haven't given much thought to that side of the subject. You see the important thing for us, is to have hospitals and clinics provided for us.

PETER. The important thing for the doctors, you say? I'm afraid that's so. Yes, I'm very much afraid that's so.

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DR. BRENT [*innocent of the thrust*]. You'll say that things — I mean conditions, are pretty bad then?

PETER [*soberly*]. It's the clutching after the wage slaves with one hand, and flinging out alms with the other, — these things bring unrest, discontent, strikes, extravagant demands; whether we have war or not, Bobby, you will see the laboring class plotting and striking — and — and — maybe worse.

DR. BRENT. But after this war there may be changes.

PETER. For this country it is hard to say; *but* for Europe yes, there will be changes. Great changes. There, there will be a new society. It will be a society made of men and women whose power will be drawn from courage and accomplishment and not from check books.

DR. BRENT. You mean to say they will be ahead of us?

PETER [*sadly*]. More than ever.

JUDITH [*appearing at the door with manuscript papers in her hand*]. Oh! I'm sorry Mr. Storm, I thought you were alone.

PETER. That's all right. Come in, Miss Miller.

DR. BRENT [*looking at his watch*]. And I must be off too, Peter, or I'll be late for a little drill some of us medicos are pulling off this morning.

PETER. Well, I am glad to see you're going to be an army surgeon, for if we do have war, I may have personal need for your services — *over there*.

DR. BRENT [*soberly and bowing to JUDITH as he moves toward the door*]. I think they've picked me out to do the *post-mortem* work, when we get there, Peter.

PETER [*looking at BRENT with a smile*]. Ahem! Thanks, thanks very much Bobby.

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DR. BRENT [*with a smile*]. Well, good-bye, Peter. Hope to see you soon.

PETER [*as he shakes hands at the door*]. The sooner, the better, Bobby. Good bye —

JUDITH [*as PETER returns to desk*]. I have all the pages in order, I think.

PETER [*as JUDITH hands him the MS. and sits*]. Was it quite a job?

JUDITH. Oh, no! I finished it long ago. I've been reading some of it — I hope you don't mind.

PETER. Well, what do you make of it?

JUDITH [*with expression of wonder*]. I never could have believed it possible — that the poor people were really being injured instead of assisted by all the charity they receive.

PETER. Well, — No, I suppose not.

JUDITH. Do you think that the people who give money to these charities are really heartless?

PETER. By no means — most of them are merely thoughtless.

JUDITH. But not all of them, I should hope.

PETER. No, no! Not by any means. Some of them are very clever.

JUDITH. Oh, I hate to think of it.

PETER. Nobody does.

JUDITH. Do you know if some one could only write a play about it. Even if it were only a Shaw dialogue, it would be better than nothing.

PETER. No, no! That would never do. People go to the theatre to be amused, not to be exposed.

JUDITH. But think of all the people who come here to the city after the truth, — how interested they would be.

PETER. People don't come to this city after the

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truth. They come so as to get away from it, and be comfortable.

JUDITH. But supposing poor people were told of the effect of this charity upon them?

PETER [*with a laugh*]. Society wouldn't thank you for that effort. Why, it's about the best bait there is for holding them in our big cities to do certain kinds of disagreeable, but highly profitable, labor; such as working under ground or in dangerous trades, where their lungs are poisoned or their legs cut off.

JUDITH [*horrified*]. How ghastly!

PETER [*continuing*]. No, we couldn't run these big overcrowded cities with their low breeding places of crime and disease, if it wasn't for our charity [*then with a smile*], but then, you know, it justifies our luxury.

JUDITH [*after a moment, anxiously*]. But, — but if we stopped our support of the poor people, they'd die.

PETER. Don't you believe it. They'd dig. Yes, and they'd go where they *could* dig, and plant and grow food, and pick health and strength from the soil; — and likewise honesty. Phew! But this modern world is an amusing muddle. Come, Miss Secretary, let's go to work.

JUDITH [*forgetting herself for a moment and looking at PETER with wide-eyed admiration*]. Do you know, Mr. Storm, — [*then checking herself suddenly looks down with embarrassment, continues*]. Oh! oh, forgive me please. For a moment I, — I, — [*then seeing that she was making the situation rather worse than better, impulsively buries her face in her hands*].

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PETER [*with a puzzled look, sits for a moment regarding her. Then gently*]. What is it?

JUDITH [*taking her hands down, looks up a little flushed*]. It's nothing. If you please, shall we go to work? [*then hurriedly picking up the MS. to divert his attention*]. Oh, Mr. Storm, I meant to ask you, — here, — where you made notes on the margin, did you wish me to do anything about these in making the copy?

PETER [*looking at the paper*]. Oh, yes, of course. Those are references to be written in. This, for example, in Hardway's text-book — that red book up there [*pointing*]. Do you think you could reach it? And I will show you what I mean.

[JUDITH goes to book-case. The door bell rings just as she reaches up and finds it above her farthest reach. Seeing the step-ladder, she puts it in place and climbs up. She is about to pull the book out, when MRS. FOSTER comes into the room, and she turns to see who it is.]

MRS. FOSTER. Mr. Peter, there's an oldish gentleman — looks like he might be a doctor — and I think it's his wife with him — callin' to see you. He's takin' off his coat now before comin' in.

PETER. Who is it, Fossie?

MRS. FOSTER. Said his name was Mr. William, — somethin', I think — Monroe.

[JUDITH, bearing her father's name is overcome, and clutching at the books to steady herself, succeeds only in tipping over the books she has grasped, and she and the books come down to the floor with a crash. As PETER looks around, she is sitting on the floor in the midst of the debris, holding out her left arm as if hurt.]

JUDITH. Ouch! Ouch! Oh!

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PETER [*going quickly to her*]. Are you hurt? There! There! Take it easy.

JUDITH. I — I think I am going to faint. Oh, my back hurts, too.

PETER [*to MRS. FOSTER, as he helps JUDITH up*]. Come here, Fossie — we must get her to the couch in the other room.

JUDITH [*pleading*]. Oh, please do, please do!

MRS. FOSTER [*standing where she is, panic stricken and unable to move*]. Shall I go for a doctor? [*Then, as an inspiration.*] Oh! Mr. Peter, there's the old gentleman — he's a doctor — I'm sure of it. I'll hurry him in.

JUDITH [*trying to make for the door*]. No, no! Don't let *him* in. Don't, don't! I don't need a doctor.

PETER [*reassuringly*]. Certainly not. Certainly not. There! There!

MRS. FOSTER. Well, here he comes, I can hear him outside the door.

JUDITH [*as she almost collapses again*]. Please, please hurry. I must lie down. Please, please!

PETER [*as he helps her along*]. Now, take it easy, take it easy — we're almost there. Come, Fossie, open the door.

MRS. FOSTER [*opening the door*]. Now, dear, you'd better let me get him in to see you.

JUDITH [*as they go through into the sitting room*]. No, no, please!

PETER. There — easy now, — easy [*the door closes behind them*].

[*From the other side of the room MR. and MRS. MONROE enter. MR. MONROE is vigorous looking — about seventy — with thick gray hair and a rather*

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florid complexion. He has eyes which are keen and bright. His gray mutton chop whiskers and somewhat drooping moustache, give him a rather old time appearance — the benevolent gentleman of a generation back. His black satin stock tie, heavy eyeglass ribbon about his neck, and his cutaway coat, all tend to emphasize this effect. MRS. MONROE is a very fashionably dressed and somewhat portly woman, some little way on in the fifties.]

MRS. MONROE [*looking around critically*]. Do you think this is the room the servant meant?

MR. MONROE [*with a genial gruffness as he sits*]. I suppose so, I suppose so.

MRS. MONROE [*continues peering around*]. You say, William, he is a student of something or other? That he is very clever?

MR. MONROE. I believe so, my dear.

MRS. MONROE. I wonder if he'll move into the Storm Mansion, now. This is no way for a young man of his wealth to be living. He'll never be able to entertain in this place.

MR. MONROE. Can't tell that he wants to, my dear.

MRS. MONROE. Well, he should. We must have him to dinner soon to meet Judith.

MR. MONROE [*pursing his lips*]. So that's why you got me here, eh? What's the matter with young Van Dusen? Ain't he rich enough for you? — eh, eh, what?

MRS. MONROE. Oh! yes, Freddie has lots of money — he could give her everything she could want. Do you know, William, I can't make that girl out. She treats him just as she treats all of the rest of them.

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MR. MONROE [*grunts*]. If she don't shine up to the men, get her interested in charity. Let her get up a bazaar or something for the hospital. We're needin' some advertisement just now.

MRS. MONROE. She seems to have found an interest already. I discovered that only the other day.

MR. MONROE. Well that's good — that's good — what is it?

MRS. MONROE. William, I'm ashamed to tell you — I really am.

MR. MONROE. Eh! What? What's that?

MRS. MONROE [*in scandalized tones*]. She has a typewriter!!

MR. MONROE [*sitting upright*]. What! What's that you say?

MRS. MONROE. She's been studying to be a private secretary, she says — learning typewriting, and shorthand, and goodness knows what all. Now she wants to go to work — wants to be of some use, she tells me.

MR. MONROE. Wants to work, eh? Well, we'll put a stop to that. [*Slapping the arms of his chair emphatically.*] I'd like to find her doing such a thing! Wants to be *useful*, eh? We haven't brought up our girl to be — ah — to work. No, no, to be sure, to be sure, of course not.

MRS. MONROE. I am sorry, William, you should be bothered with this, now — and after all we've done for her, too. It's too, too disgraceful. And with all the trouble you've had lately — and then those dreadful doctors at the hospital, with all their bad management, and wastefulness.

MR. MONROE. My dear, in some respects

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doctors are like children — and when it comes to matters of business, it's best to treat 'em as such. Yes, just so, just so.

MRS. MONROE. But Dr. Talbert is different, haven't you often said so.

MR. MONROE. Talbert is a remarkable man, my dear — remarkable — he never should have gone into medicine.

MRS. MONROE. Yes, he is wonderful [*after a little pause*]. William, won't Mr. Storm think it a little strange our calling on him this way?

MR. MONROE. Not in the least, my dear, not in the least. You don't suppose I'm going to tell him what you came for — ah, just so — just so — This is just a little social call, my dear — just a little social call. I knew his uncle, old friend! old friend!

MRS. MONROE. But the Hospital — but St. Stephen's — doesn't really need money, does it? He won't get the idea that we are here on that account?

MR. MONROE. Now, don't get foolish notions in your head, my dear, foolish notions [*with a flicker of fun in his eyes*]. Everything needs money, of course — everything, my dear, — everything.

PETER [*at that moment entering room*]. Sorry to have kept you waiting. [*Bowing*] Mrs. Monroe, I believe, Mr. Monroe.

[MR. and MRS. MONROE rise.]

MRS. MONROE [*holding out her hand to PETER*]. I am so glad to meet you Mr. Storm.

PETER [*with a smile*]. It is an unexpected honor.

MR. MONROE [*taking PETER by the hand*]. This is just one of my old fashioned notions, Mr. Storm — yes, old fashioned notions — yes, just so, just so.

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I knew your uncle, — yes — fine old gentleman, yes, just so, — you understand — yes, of course, of course.

PETER [*to MR. and MRS. MONROE*]. But won't you sit down?

MRS. MONROE [*as MR. MONROE sits*]. Oh, do let me see something of your home first, Mr. Storm. Isn't it studious? — Books everywhere [*glancing at the mass of books on the floor*]. I hear you have become quite famous as a writer, or something [*walks toward the sitting room*]. Now, this is your dining room, I expect. A bachelor's house is always so exciting — I've heard of bachelor supper parties — and lunch parties, but may I peep in? [*Putting her hand on the door*].

PETER [*quickly*]. Not in there.

MRS. MONROE [*recoils and steps quickly toward the centre of the room*]. Oh!

PETER [*smiling*]. That's not the dining room.

MRS. MONROE [*with a society laugh*]. How you frightened me, dear Mr. Storm.

PETER [*politely*]. Did I? I'm sorry, but won't you sit down?

[*They sit, and the next moment's silence is broken by a female voice coming indistinctly from the next room.*]

VOICE [*laughter*]. Of course I don't need a doctor.

MRS. MONROE [*jumping up*]. Good gracious! What's that? It sounded very much like a young woman's voice [*pointing*] in *that* room.

PETER [*smothering a smile*]. I thought so, too.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. — *The drawing room of the MONROE's house, New York.*

TIME. — *Afternoon, same day.*

The heavy hangings of this room, the richly bound volumes of books, the furniture, the rugs, ornaments and statues tell at a glance that here is at least unusual wealth, if perhaps not wholly unusual taste. MRS. MONROE is just putting her teacup on the tray which the liveried butler is taking away. JUDITH is sitting on a footstool near her, looking at the annual report of St. Stephen's hospital. She is showing no ill effects from her recent fall from the step-ladder; in fact she is looking very well and happy.

MRS. MONROE [*in a somewhat petulant tone*]. Judith, my dear, I wish you had put yourself out a little more to be polite to Mrs. Hopkins this afternoon.

JUDITH. I don't like her.

MRS. MONROE. How tactless you are! She is a very intimate friend of the Tracy Lawrences.

JUDITH. And the Tracy Lawrences are snobs.

MRS. MONROE [*virtuously*]. Why, Judith! Mrs. Lawrence takes the greatest interest in charitable work.

JUDITH. One sees that in the newspapers.

MRS. MONROE. And I should be glad to see her give her interest to our hospital — to St. Stephen's — as well.

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JUDITH [*with a sly little laugh*]. And then perhaps she might invite you to her dinner parties. [*Impatiently.*] Why must people always be using their charities and their churches to get themselves into society or into print — or into something else?

MRS. MONROE [*heated*]. Judith! I think it is time you and I understood each other.

JUDITH [*demurely smiling*]. But don't we, Mama?

MRS. MONROE [*her voice slightly raised*]. When I think of the years your father has spent in building up and adding to St. Stephen's Hospital — of the hundreds and hundreds of poor sick people whom each year his generosity and devotion have helped back to useful and happy lives — which *you* seem so utterly to forget —

JUDITH [*vivaciously*]. No indeed, Mama, for here [*holding up the book she has in her hand*] in the Annual Report — of — of "good works" — we are kept from forgetting. Here on the very first page — Mr. William T. Monroe, Chairman of the Financial Committee — and, a little further along, Chairman of the Committee on Nominations. [*She turns a page or two.*] Here you are, Mother. Mrs. William T. Monroe, President of the Woman's Auxiliary and Chairman of Committee on Social Service. Oh! Oh! — and here's Father again under "Donations" — the very first one, — and —

MRS. MONROE [*breaking in*]. Judith Miller Monroe! Have you no respect?

JUDITH [*with a merry little laugh, as she throws the book on the table*]. And still, we haven't been invited to Mrs. Tracy Lawrence's parties.

MRS. MONROE. Judith!

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JUDITH. I'm sick of it all. I wish we were just plain respectable people with some real friends.

MRS. MONROE. How can you talk so, when your father and I have given you everything, everything.

JUDITH [*bitterly*]. Yes, everything except the chance to live my own life.

MRS. MONROE. But I have plans for you, for your happiness, my dear, that you do not even suspect.

JUDITH [*with animation*]. I do suspect, and I don't like him. The only thing he can talk about is Wall Street, and the only thing he can think about is Broadway; besides he has a horrid nose.

MRS. MONROE [*disgusted*]. I've often said to your father what a mistake it was that we ever allowed you to go off to school in Switzerland that winter, with nobody but that governess.

JUDITH. Indeed, Mama?

MRS. MONROE. Mixing up with all sorts of people on a steamer and getting all sorts of ideas. You've never seemed to see things in the proper way since.

JUDITH [*a far off look coming into her eyes*]. It was wonderful!

MRS. MONROE [*after a pause in which JUDITH sits looking dreamily off into the distance*]. But come! I didn't mean to get your mind off on that unfortunate trip. It's only lucky you did not fall in with some poor and utterly unsuitable young man while out of our sight. [*Noticing JUDITH's inattention and speaking in a sharper key.*] That at least we have to be thankful for.

JUDITH [*aroused from her thoughts*]. Excuse me, what was that, Mama?

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MRS. MONROE [*rather pettishly*]. It is hardly of enough importance to repeat, my dear, but when you learn to be more attentive you will be a more agreeable companion.

JUDITH [*the smile of her happy thoughts still lingering*]. I am sorry.

MRS. MONROE. The point is — Here you are, going on to twenty-five. You will not go out into society — you will not take an interest in our charity work — and what is to become of you?

JUDITH [*smiling*]. I can try to do something useful, Mama.

MRS. MONROE [*sarcastically*]. Ridiculous!

JUDITH. But I've studied.

MRS. MONROE. Why, this is absurd! When have you studied?

JUDITH [*jumping up with a laugh and dancing about*]. Oh! while you've been having the time of your life rushing about at charity teas, and fairs, and bridge parties, for the sake of the poor dear suffering ones in the hospital.

WINTERS [*coming in*]. Dr. Cleaver is calling to see Mr. Monroe, Madam.

MRS. MONROE. Ask him to come in here, Winters.

WINTERS [*as he withdraws*]. Very good, Madam.

JUDITH [*as she skips toward the door*]. And I must go now for my practice — on — the typewriter.

MRS. MONROE [*with a shudder*]. Oh! [*then with a look of wonder*]. What has come over her? For all the world like a school girl again!

WINTERS [*re-entering with DR. CLEAVER*]. Dr. Cleaver, Madam.

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MRS. MONROE. Ah! Good afternoon, Dr. Cleaver — so glad to see you.

DR. CLEAVER [*a strong, somewhat grizzled man on toward sixty, but still holding all he has with a jealous hand and reaching out for more*]. Good afternoon, Madam. Is your husband at home?

MRS. MONROE [*lavishing a social smile*]. Not yet. But do sit down, Doctor. I hear you are quite the rage this winter — that no woman is really smart unless she has been seen in your waiting room. But won't you sit down?

DR. CLEAVER [*with rather a gruff voice, as they sit*]. The only way for a woman to keep well is to keep in fashion.

MRS. MONROE. But tell me, — the hospital, — I hope that is flourishing!

DR. CLEAVER. Flourishing? the devil, it's floundering!

MRS. MONROE [*in alarm*]. Why — but what can you mean? I don't understand.

DR. CLEAVER. None of 'em seem to.

MRS. MONROE. Oh! this is dreadful! Does Mr. Monroe — does my husband know?

DR. CLEAVER [*laconically*]. He sent for me.

MRS. MONROE. What has happened — what is it?

DR. CLEAVER. Oh, the same old story.

MRS. MONROE. But what is it? Are the nurses dissatisfied again — have they struck?

DR. CLEAVER [*almost roaring*]. No! I wish to — I wish they had. We'd get a new lot of 'em then.

MRS. MONROE [*visibly stirred*]. It can't be that the Ladies' Auxiliary — you know I'm President of that, Doctor, — has done anything?

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DR. CLEAVER. Never *has* done anything that I know of — er — er — that is — the trouble's not there, Mrs. Monroe.

MRS. MONROE [*oblivious*]. If you knew how anxious I am!

DR. CLEAVER. But they *would* do it.

MRS. MONROE. Do what?

DR. CLEAVER. Do what? Why put this extra story on the Hospital for Cripples — "Little Sunshine Heaven," they called it.

MRS. MONROE. But what have *they* got to do with it?

DR. CLEAVER. The cripples? They've got nothing to do with it — but "Little Sunshine Heaven" has.

MRS. MONROE [*looking perplexed*]. I don't understand it at all — at all.

DR. CLEAVER. None of 'em seem to — that's the trouble — none of 'em.

MRS. MONROE [*still perplexed*]. Do the Trustees know of this?

DR. CLEAVER. They ought to — I've told 'em what would happen — but they insisted.

MRS. MONROE. Insisted?

DR. CLEAVER. Yes, they *would* do something — go into some fresh expense. The same old thing over again; spend money they didn't have.

MRS. MONROE. But the hospital's rich.

DR. CLEAVER. Rich? Did you ever see a hospital that was rich, Madam?

MRS. MONROE. But St. Stephen's —

DR. CLEAVER. Why, it's mortgaged to the hilt, and going behind more every year.

MRS. MONROE. But surely —

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DR. CLEAVER [*waving his head like a bear*]. *Would* have it — nothing else to be done. St. Peter's Hospital was beating us out, and they had to raise the ant — raise the "Little Sunshine" to show 'em what we could do.

MRS. MONROE [*proudly*]. But my husband is rich.

DR. CLEAVER. Rich — of course he's rich. He can afford a big steam yacht — two of 'em, if he wants to — but when it comes to hospitals — well, I told 'em they were travelling too fast.

MRS. MONROE [*in despair*]. And now what is going to happen?

DR. CLEAVER. She's going to turn turtle, I guess.

MRS. MONROE [*in amazement*]. To what?

DR. CLEAVER [*brutally*]. Turn turtle — topple over — go under — sink! That's plain enough, isn't it?

MRS. MONROE [*choking*]. Oh! What shall I do? What *shall* I do? I'll never be able to face those other women of St. Peter's and the Infirmary again — Mrs. Hopkins — Mrs. Tracy La —, Oh! It's too awful! And if I do not have St. Stephen's I shall have nerves again, I know I shall.

[DR. CLEAVER, *thrusting his hands in his pockets and waving his bushy head, starts to walk up and down in impatience.*]

WINTERS [*enters and somewhat startled by the situation, hesitates a moment — then announces:*]. Dr. Talbert, Madam, to see Mr. Monroe.

MRS. MONROE [*confused*]. I'm not at home — I'm out, Winters.

WINTERS [*with dignity*]. To see *Mr.* Monroe, Madam.

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MRS. MONROE [*wearily*]. Have him come in, Winters. [*To DR. CLEAVER.*] Oh, dear! I think one of my old headaches is coming on. I must leave Dr. Talbert with you.

DR. CLEAVER [*professionally*]. By all means, by all means — too bad — really, too bad. No doubt something has disagreed with you — yes — yes no doubt.

MRS. MONROE [*as she leaves*]. Yes, I think there is no doubt about it, Doctor.

DR. TALBERT [*comes into the room with a stride — a man of about fifty-five, a little below the average height and a little above the average breadth — spare light hair — a roundish face — very bright eyes — a very positive manner — spontaneous chuckling laugh which somewhat gives the inner man away; a plausible politician — so plausible that but few find it out, but for all that and the small matter of having no conscience, he is a delightful man — buoyant, cheerful and jolly.* Hello, Cleaver! What you doing here? Ha! ha!

DR. CLEAVER [*coming to a halt and looking at DR. TALBERT*]. Same errand that you're on, I guess.

DR. TALBERT. Hospital?

DR. CLEAVER [*with vehement disgust*]. Yes, and a damn rotten piece of business it's going to be, too.

DR. TALBERT. Oh, we'll pull out! [*leans easily against a chair.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*bursting out*]. Well, I tell you, Talbert, if something isn't done to float her [*impressively jabbing down with his finger*] she's going under.

DR. TALBERT [*chuckling*]. Cleaver, you're in good form this afternoon. Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

DR. CLEAVER. You'd be too, if you were on the

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surgical end of it up there — and had all your eggs in the one basket.

DR. TALBERT. Perhaps that's right, Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER [*striking the table with his fist*]. Damn it, man! If the thing goes to smash, I'm done for.

DR. TALBERT. Pshaw, Cleaver! You're on the top of the heap.

DR. CLEAVER. And how did I get there?

DR. TALBERT. By helping them with their hospital — by helping old Monroe, of course — that's good business.

DR. CLEAVER. Exactly. And what could we have done without their money — without the hospital? That's what's built us up — made us. [*Then, with a sigh.*] And think of all those private rooms I got them to put in, too.

DR. TALBERT [*chuckling*]. They have to have us doctors, you know. Ha, ha!

DR. CLEAVER [*disgusted*]. Yes, but if St. Stephen's goes bust, we go bust. You know that, Talbert. And there's no money in helping the poor.

DR. TALBERT. Why, man! if you did that, you'd be as poor as one of the twelve apostles yourself, before you knew it.

DR. CLEAVER. No argument there, Talbert.

DR. TALBERT [*in a half confidential tone*]. Help the rich, they know their game. That's my motto.

DR. CLEAVER. Do you know, I sometimes wonder if the poor wouldn't actually be better off if they weren't given alms.

DR. TALBERT. Now — now don't go and get sentimental, Cleaver; that's not *our* funeral. Better stick to my motto — "Help the rich, they know their game." Ha, ha!

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DR. CLEAVER. Don't worry, Talbert, I shan't stir up anything. I'm in too deep for that.

DR. TALBERT [*waving his hand around, by way of changing the topic, and pointing to some of the statuary and ornaments*]. Say, Cleaver, did you ever notice any of these relics the old man has here? Some pretty costly ones among 'em, I guess.

DR. CLEAVER. Costly? They'd keep several families out of the poor-house for what they cost, I imagine.

DR. TALBERT [*with a cunning smile*]. They put several families into the poor-house, before they could be purchased — from what I've heard of his Trust's way of doing business! Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

DR. CLEAVER. Ugh! Talbert, and this is what we doctors must sell our souls for, if we are going to succeed.

DR. TALBERT. Come, come, Cleaver, let's change the subject — What's new at the Hospital?

DR. CLEAVER. Yes, yes! that reminds me. Did young Hooker come to you about getting the job as surgical assistant?

DR. TALBERT. He did not.

DR. CLEAVER. Well, he came to see me.

DR. TALBERT [*giving CLEAVER a sly look and a nudge*]. He'd be able to help you fill some of those private rooms, Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER. Humph! I think I can attend to that myself.

DR. TALBERT [*confidentially*]. They say he's a friend of the family, here — very intimate.

DR. CLEAVER [*showing surprise*]. The deuce, you say?

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! Ha, ha! Well, never mind, Cleaver; we can side-track that, I guess.

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DR. CLEAVER [*attentive*]. You don't say! How?

DR. TALBERT. Slip in some one else.

DR. CLEAVER. Have you any one to propose?

DR. TALBERT. Come to think of it, I can think of one or two.

DR. CLEAVER [*interested*]. Do I know them?

DR. TALBERT [*indifferently*]. Now, I wonder if you do? Oh, while I think of it, Cleaver! I guess you are going to be the next President of the Surgical Society — in fact, I've practically fixed it.

DR. CLEAVER [*interested*]. Really, do you think you can put that through? I'll be mighty grateful to you.

DR. TALBERT. Practically sure of it — but now — what were we talking about?

DR. CLEAVER. That position of surgical assistant.

DR. TALBERT. Oh, yes, to be sure! I wonder if you know my younger brother? He'd be just the man for you. He'd do what you wanted, too.

DR. CLEAVER. Never occurred to me — Why, of course, I know him.

DR. TALBERT. How about it?

DR. CLEAVER. I'll think it over.

DR. TALBERT. Think it over! There's no time, man! — That fellow, Hooker, — with his influence here [*pointing downward*] will get the job sure.

DR. CLEAVER. Perhaps that's so — Perhaps that's so.

DR. TALBERT. Not a word, Cleaver, not a word. We'll fix it at the next meeting — slip *our* candidate right through before their eyes are open. [*Then rapidly.*] It's about time the old man showed up [*looking at his watch*]. Don't you think so?

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DR. CLEAVER. Gad, Talbert! I hope Monroe'll be able to tide things over for St. Stephen's. It's a big sum of money, though, that's needed, and I don't know where else we're going to get it.

DR. TALBERT. Well, he won't. I'll tell you that, right now.

DR. CLEAVER. He won't? Why, it's the apple of his eye, — President of the Board of Trustees — he's prouder of that title than anything else he has.

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! He ought to be — it cost him more. Ha, ha! But just the same, he won't because he can't.

DR. CLEAVER. What do you mean, Talbert? [*Wiping his brow.*]

DR. TALBERT [*coming close*]. Now, this is strictly confidential — just between you and me.

DR. CLEAVER [*attentive*].

DR. TALBERT. He's been hit, and pretty hard.

DR. CLEAVER. Hit?

DR. TALBERT. In the Street — in Wall Street. Lost a lot of money lately. [*In a low voice.*] His broker happens to be a patient of mine.

DR. CLEAVER. He told you?

DR. TALBERT. No, no! *Certainly* not! I found it out by accident, of course.

DR. CLEAVER [*utterly dejected*]. By God! Then, Talbert, we're done for, eh?

DR. TALBERT [*his eyes sparkling, goes off into a long fit of laughter*]. Ha, ha! Not by a jugful are we done for. Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

DR. CLEAVER [*thrusting his hands in his pockets — waving his protruded bushy head, — growls*]. It's a fine joke — a very fine joke, Talbert. Humph!

DR. TALBERT [*impressively*]. Say, does the name

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Storm — Peter Storm — convey anything to your mind?

DR. CLEAVER. Umph! It ought to. I operated on him some years ago, and I distinctly remember that it conveyed something to my pocket.

DR. TALBERT. The old fellow has only just died here lately, and he was a rich man, Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER. But you're clever, Talbert — you always have an eye out when the rich ones die.

DR. TALBERT. It's just as well. The young heirs often need a little guidance in their benevolent budding, you know, Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER [*with a gruff laugh*]. Go on talking, Talbert, I like to hear your voice.

DR. TALBERT. Well, here it is. Young Peter Storm, a nephew of the old man, is the sole heir.

DR. CLEAVER. Yes, yes!

DR. TALBERT. And by the merest chance I have become acquainted with him.

DR. CLEAVER [*with a rough laugh*]. Those merely chance meetings of yours — go on, Talbert.

DR. TALBERT. Well, he's promised to come here this afternoon. You know we have a vacancy on the Board of Trustees?

DR. CLEAVER [*admiringly*]. Talbert, how *do* you do it?

DR. TALBERT [*murmuring*]. And what Monroe says, goes; and there's not much doubt but that the old man will greet the sight of a sail, after that little squall down in the stock market.

DR. CLEAVER [*much taken*]. By gad, Talbert! this may solve the whole problem. Does Storm seem interested?

DR. TALBERT [*puzzled*]. Can't make out.

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DR. CLEAVER. What sort of chap is he? What's his business?

DR. TALBERT. He has some sort of literary pursuit or other — but he's no fool.

DR. CLEAVER [*with blunt sarcasm*]. Have you told him all about the splendid work the hospital is doing — all the suffering which is relieved there — how grateful the poor are for our kindness — what *great* public benefactors we are?

DR. TALBERT. I've *poured* it into him.

DR. CLEAVER. How does he take it?

DR. TALBERT. He listened attentively.

DR. CLEAVER. The deuce! And did you explain what it means in the public eye to have one's name on a Hospital Board, such as St. Stephen's — the great respect and admiration such a position always assures — the public notice which it brings?

DR. TALBERT. He's not the sort to fall for that stuff, Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER. Now, that's probably just where we'll get him — it seldom fails — that's human nature.

DR. TALBERT. Well, he's consented to come here. That'll do to start with, all right.

[MR. MONROE *comes into the room, followed by WINTERS, who takes his hat and coat as he removes them.*]

MR. MONROE. Sorry, gentlemen, very sorry not to have been here when you arrived. How are you today, Talbert? [*shaking hands*]. Humph! And you, Cleaver? Let us sit down. I have just been going over the books of the Hospital again this afternoon, with our Treasurer. Yes, with our Treasurer.

DR. CLEAVER [*with some anxiety*]. And what is the outlook, sir? What do you make of it?

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MR. MONROE [*deliberately and ominously*]. The worst! There seems to be no alternative. I am afraid we must close its doors, unless ——

DR. CLEAVER. Unless —— ?

MR. MONROE. We can solicit the interest of some one with very considerable wealth.

DR. CLEAVER. Unfortunately, most of them have their charitable connections made.

DR. TALBERT. But not all — not all. Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

MR. MONROE [*turning quickly and with interest*]. You know of none such, Talbert? You know of none such?

DR. TALBERT. I know of one such.

MR. MONROE. You do?

DR. TALBERT. And more, I have asked him to meet us here today. He is the sole heir of the recently lamented Peter Storm.

MR. MONROE [*raising his eyebrows*]. Ah — so — here? You say — you have asked him to meet us *here*? [*Then with a smile.*] Talbert, I see you are still an early riser!

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! Reports put the inheritance ——

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes, I know! Very high — very high —— [*spreading his hands*]. But what can we offer him?

DR. TALBERT. W-e-l-l. There's that vacancy on the Board of Trustees.

MR. MONROE [*suddenly reserved*]. Tut, tut! We must not go too fast — not too fast. With his wealth and that position ——

DR. CLEAVER. The Board are with you?

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes, I believe so, — I be-

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lieve so. [*In an undertone.*] They ought to be — I put them in myself.

DR. TALBERT [*pressing the subject*]. There's not much time to choose.

MR. MONROE [*with deliberation*]. Humph! I must consider this.

DR. TALBERT. I heard today that one of the Trustees of St. Peter's —

MR. MONROE [*keenly*]. Eh? What's that — what's that about St. Peter's?

DR. TALBERT. — had been seen talking with Mr. Storm.

MR. MONROE [*leaning forward and speaking very emphatically*]. Then we must have him on our Board — that settles it! [*After a moment's pause he gets up — the others following him — and they proceed into the next room.*] Talbert, you are a remarkable man — yes, yes, — quite remarkable! Now, gentlemen, I would like to get your opinion on some plans I have for another addition to the Hospital. Yes, yes! Just so! I was really commencing to fear — yes, yes — but come and see — come and see. [*They disappear.*]

[*A moment or two elapses, when WINTERS comes to the door, — standing to one side to let DR. BRENT enter.*]

DR. BRENT. Will you say to Mr. Monroe, please, that I should like to speak to him on a matter which concerns the Dispensary at St. Stephen's. My name is Dr. Brent, and I am one of the staff there.

WINTERS [*stiffly*]. Mr. Monroe is engaged just now, — but if you will be seated —

DR. BRENT [*as WINTERS withdraws*]. Thank

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you. [*He sits down and is quietly waiting, when WINTER'S voice is heard outside.*]

WINTERS. If you will step this way, Mr. Storm, please — [*WINTERS appears at the door, bowing and speaking with marked respect as he stands aside for PETER to enter.*] Dr. Talbert is expecting you sir — if you will kindly —

PETER [*unimpressed*]. That's all right. [*Then seeing BRENT.*] Hello, there, Bobby! I didn't think we'd be meeting again so soon. What are you doing here? [*As WINTERS withdraws PETER and BRENT greet each other with a hand shake.*]

DR. BRENT [*earnestly*]. Nor did I. I've come to see if I couldn't get some of the managers of the Hospital to take some personal interest in the patients who come in the Dispensary.

PETER. Whew! Bobby! but you're ambitious. But say, you don't mean to tell me it's St. Stephen's, where you work?

DR. BRENT. Yes, why do you ask?

PETER. Oh, no special reason — it just struck me as being funny — that's all — that the hospital where you are — well —

DR. BRENT. Peter, what are you driving at?

PETER. Look here, Bobby! Do you know why I'm here this afternoon?

DR. BRENT. Can't imagine. Thought you were down on riches.

PETER. By no means. It takes brains to make a lot of money. Not the best kind of brains to be sure, still it takes brains.

DR. BRENT. Then why are you here?

PETER [*with a sort of grin*]. Be hanged if I know! Now just listen to this, Bobby. Ever since my

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uncle's death, it seems as if about every charity institution in town had taken a crack at me. Their solicitors, or trustees, or doctors have called on me or stopped me in the street — or in the club — to ask me to subscribe, or donate, or become a life member, or have my name put on a brass tablet —

DR. BRENT [*as PETER pauses to take breath*]. How do you ever get rid of them?

PETER. Oh, that part's easy enough! The first chance I get to speak, I simply state my circumstances. Presto! The conversation swings. An engagement elsewhere is suddenly thought of. Naturally they don't tell any one else they've barked up the wrong tree. But in the present instance, it didn't work out that way.

DR. BRENT. What do you mean?

PETER. I mean this, Bobby; that in the case of St. Stepehn's Hospital, it didn't end that way.

DR. BRENT. That is, they wouldn't believe it when you told them you weren't rich? — that's what you mean?

PETER. Bobby, in this case I *didn't* tell them I wasn't rich.

DR. BRENT [*opening his eyes wide*]. What! You led them to believe — ?

PETER. I led them to believe nothing. Something seemed to hold my tongue, and when this man Talbert finally asked me if I wouldn't come here this afternoon, I said I would. And this is the point — [*going up close to BRENT*] for the life of me, Bobby, I can't tell you why I did it.

DR. BRENT. That's strange.

PETER. Strange! Why the thing is positively uncanny.

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DR. BRENT. There must be some reason, of course.

PETER. Of course there is, but what is it? That's the puzzle. [*Pause.*] See here, Bobby, have you happened to read any of that psychologist fellow — Mitchell's stuff — on impressions which seem to get lost in the subconscious — a name, — a face for instance; — which, though we've forgotten, we really haven't forgotten. Can it be something of this sort?

WINTERS [*entering hurriedly, with a little slip of paper in his hand*]. Dr. Brent, here's a message just come by telephone for you, sir [*handing the paper*].

DR. BRENT [*looking at the slip*]. Oh, yes, I know! Thank you. [*To PETER.*] Peter, I must be off. This is an urgent case — I wish I didn't have to hurry away.

PETER [*as BRENT starts for the door*]. Sorry, too, Bobby, old man, but good luck to you [*waving goodbye*].

[*Left alone, he wanders about the room, when his eye falls on some ornaments in which he becomes interested.* DR. TALBERT enters, followed by MR. MONROE and DR. CLEAVER.]

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! There you are, Mr. Storm! I've just been telling Mr. Monroe and Dr. Cleaver about our fortunate meeting, and your interest in what our great hospitals are doing for the poor.

PETER [*with the shadow of a smile, as he joins them*]. They're the making of the poor. I feel pretty sure of that.

DR. TALBERT [*missing it*]. Ha, ha! Bravo! Now, let me introduce you to Mr. Monroe.

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MR. MONROE [*smiling, and shaking hands*]. Had that pleasure before — eh? yes, just so, just so! Glad to see you are interested in our work, Mr. Storm. Shake hands with Dr. Cleaver — he is our great surgeon.

DR. CLEAVER. Glad to meet you, Mr. Storm, *very*.

MR. MONROE. Suppose we sit down, gentlemen — ah, just so, just so.

DR. TALBERT [*to MR. MONROE, as they sit*]. You will tell Mr. Storm why we wished him to meet us here today, will you not sir?

MR. MONROE [*with a non-committal expression*]. The matter is this, Mr. Storm. There is need for younger men at our hospital — at St. Stephen's. From what Dr. Talbert has told me, I should say we would be very fortunate, if we could secure your co-operation and advice. Yes, yes! just so!

PETER [*with a slight smile*]. There is no chance that Dr. Talbert has made a mistake?

DR. CLEAVER [*leaning forward*]. Mr. Storm, we simply can't take no for an answer. *You* are the man we want.

MR. MONROE [*with dignified emphasis*]. As a member of our Board of Trustees, Mr. Storm.

PETER [*fencing*]. I'm afraid my advice might not be helpful.

MR. MONROE [*waving the idea away*]. Tut, tut! You are too modest, sir — too modest.

DR. CLEAVER. You should allow *us* to be the judges, Mr. Storm.

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! He is too modest. Now, I should say that's just the sort of man whose advice is really good — eh, Cleaver?

MR. MONROE [*patting PETER on the shoulder, and*

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smiling]. You see, your opinion is quite over-ruled, Mr. Storm, — quite over-ruled.

PETER. Now, if it was a substantial sum of money — ?

[DR. CLEAVER *almost bounds from his chair, but is gently pushed back by MR. MONROE. DR. TALBERT starts forward also, but controls himself. PETER's face remains impassive, though a close observer might see a stray sparkle in his eyes.*]

MR. MONROE. Tut, tut! Mr. Storm. Why make an allusion to the material side. Yes, yes! quite so, quite so —. Of course, later on, if you see that there is any little need in that direction — you understand, of course — yes, yes — quite so — quite so!

PETER. I *think* I understand. [*Rising, as if to go.*] And I shall certainly treasure the memory of this meeting. [*Then, to MR. MONROE.*] What a fine statue that is over there. I was struck with it the moment I saw it.

MR. MONROE [*without much interest*]. Oh, yes! I picked that up in an auction sale out in the Middle West — must be twenty-five years ago — yes, just so, just so!

[*The others have risen also, DR. CLEAVER pulls DR. TALBERT to one side.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*in a whisper*]. It's St. Peter's Hospital, Talbert. They've got him there; that's why he's holding us off.

DR. TALBERT. Hush, man, he'll hear you.

WINTERS [*entering*]. Did you ring, sir?

MR. MONROE. No.

WINTERS. I beg pardon, Mr. Monroe — the gentleman calling to see you, had to leave, sir.

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MR. MONROE. What gentleman? What are you talking about, man? What are you talking about?

WINTERS. Dr. Brent, he said his name was, sir — works in the Dispensary at the Hospital, sir.

MR. MONROE [*turning to* DR. TALBERT]. Who is Dr. Brent? Do you know, Talbert?

DR. TALBERT. I have reason to — he's given us enough trouble in the Dispensary.

MR. MONROE [*to* WINTERS]. You may go.

WINTERS [*withdraws*]. Very good, sir.

MR. MONROE [*to* DR. TALBERT]. Enough trouble?

DR. TALBERT. Trouble! Ha, ha! I should say so. Ask Cleaver.

[DR. CLEAVER *leaves* PETER *standing apart, and joins them.* PETER *looks at ornaments.*]

MR. MONROE [*to* DR. CLEAVER]. Trouble in the Dispensary? What's this, Cleaver?

DR. CLEAVER. Truth is, he's no good there. Never should have been given the job in the first place.

[PETER, *though apparently indifferent, is now paying strict attention.*]

MR. MONROE. What's the trouble?

DR. CLEAVER. Well, he's not got the snap we need in a man there. He's too slow — he takes too much time over each patient — too careful, I guess — any way, we don't get the material in the wards we ought to have — the beds go empty — our operations have fallen off — that makes the records too slim.

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes! But that's hardly the thing to take action on.

DR. TALBERT. How about stealing patients

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from the Dispensary — getting them to go to his office for a fee? Wasn't there something of that sort, Cleaver?

DR. CLEAVER. I think there was. Dispensary patients have been seen going to his office, I understand.

MR. MONROE. That's a pretty serious charge, unless you have the evidence, eh? A young doctor's career is about gone, if he goes out that way. You know that, Talbert.

DR. TALBERT. We'd better get him out. He's no help to the service. What do you think, Cleaver?

DR. CLEAVER. Yes, yes! I think so.

DR. TALBERT. I can get the evidence all right, I guess. Better have him up on charges next meeting. I'll attend to the details.

MR. MONROE. Well, gentlemen, you should know what's best for the Hospital. We can't have our records run behind. Now that St. Peter's has got that new wing, they are pressing us pretty hard — pretty hard.

DR. TALBERT. When's the next meeting?

DR. CLEAVER. Let's see. Today's Tuesday. Yes, it's tomorrow afternoon.

DR. TALBERT. Not much time, but we can have this end of the meeting right down in the Dispensary. Don't need to be too formal, either. Leave it to me, gentlemen. We'll have the evidence there, too. Ha, ha!

[The group breaks up, and, as they see PETER, give a start of surprise and slight embarrassment at having forgotten his presence.]

MR. MONROE *[to PETER]*. A thousand pardons for this little interruption, Mr. Storm. Just a small

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hospital matter to settle, — very sorry — very. Yes, yes, just so!

PETER. Don't mention it, Mr. Monroe. I was glad of this opportunity to think over your offer.

DR. CLEAVER [*starting forward*]. Favorably, I hope, Mr. Storm? Favorably, I hope?

DR. TALBERT. Yes, yes, Mr. Storm?

MR. MONROE. Ah, just so, just so! There's the place on the Board, Mr. Storm — eh, what?

PETER [*slowly*]. You may expect me at the next meeting.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE. — *Dispensary of St. Stephen's Hospital.*

TIME. — *Next afternoon.*

A large white-walled apartment, with red tiled floor. Six or eight feet away from the left wall, where the entrance door and a good-sized window are, is a railing about three feet high, which runs back to within a couple of feet of a booth with a window in its cage-like upper half, much the same as one usually sees in city shops for the cashier. In this booth sits the registrar on a high stool, admitting and directing the patients as they come in. These are known as the out-patients of the hospital, as their sickness or injury does not confine them to bed. Inside the rail is a considerable space occupied only by two or three long wooden benches. On the right side of the room, and protected from publicity by an ordinary white hospital screen, is an operating table, a cabinet, an instrument table, and the other usual appliances for the care of emergency cases applying to the dispensary. Further back, in the right wall, is the door leading to the lower floor of the hospital. In the centre of the back wall is a broad doorway leading to the main department of the dispensary, and so labelled in large black letters above it. Through the doorway can be seen more benches and other doors, also labelled — "Medical," "Surgical," etc. The bare walls are relieved only by one or two placards giving the rules of the institution, and by the framed dispensary certificate which institu-

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tions acting within the law must exhibit. It is nearing the closing hour, and PATRICK FAGAN, the Registrar, is admitting the last of the patients, who are crowding their way to the window, in order to get in before the time is up and no more admissions are made.

FAGAN [*to the patients*]. Here, here! Stop yer shovin' there! This ain't a steamboat excursion. [*Then, as a young woman in cheap finery, crowned by a hat — a creation in size and color — pushes up to the window.*] You been here before?

YOUNG WOMAN. Sure.

FAGAN. Where's your card?

YOUNG WOMAN. You know, it's a funny thing about that card. I had it the other day —

FAGAN [*cutting her short, angrily*]. You've lost it, you mean?

YOUNG WOMAN. I just couldn't find it when I was comin' out.

FAGAN. You'd try the patience of the saints — the way ye keep losin' them tickets. Well, see you hang on to this wan. What's yer name?

YOUNG WOMAN. Mamie Murray.

FAGAN [*writing on a card and handing it to her*]. Pass in. Next!

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN [*dressed as first, but not nearly so gaudily*]. I'm with this young lady what's just gone in.

FAGAN. Been here before?

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN. No, sir.

FAGAN. Ye know the rules of this clinic?

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN. What rules?

FAGAN. Well, read 'em up on the back of this card. What's yer name?

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SECOND YOUNG WOMAN. Miss Angelina Kitchen.

FAGAN [*writing on card*]. Miss Angelina Kitchen. Now see you don't lose this [*pushes it out to her*]. Take a seat on the bench.

[MISS KITCHEN *steps in and takes a seat by the side of MAMIE MURRAY on the front bench.*]

FAGAN. Next!

[*A well, but rather noticeably dressed man from all appearances a travelling salesman or buyer, steps to the window. He has a swelling on his neck, which is quite obvious.*]

FAGAN. What's your name?

MAN [*hesitating*]. Ah — ah — Henry Smith.

FAGAN [*writing on a card*]. Ye know the rules of this institution, Mr. Smith?

SMITH [*off-handishly*]. Oh, yes.

FAGAN. It's for poor people with no money. You don't look like one of 'em.

[HENRY SMITH *leans forward and whispers something to FAGAN. At the same time, with an easy manner, slips something into FAGAN's hand on the counter, which seems to result in a mutual understanding, as their hands are withdrawn.*]

FAGAN. Here's your card, Mr. Smith. Take a seat. [*As HENRY SMITH goes to the bench.*] Next!

A WOMAN [*shawl over her head, old skirt looped up in the usual scrub-woman fashion, presents her card for inspection*]. I'm come special.

FAGAN. Special?

WOMAN. Yah. To see the Professor — he sent for me.

FAGAN [*looking at her card again, then taking it*]. You wait here for a minute. [*He gets out of the booth from behind and, card in hand, walks across the room and through door leading to hospital.*]

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MAMIE MURRAY [*seeing the registrar leave the room*]. Say, Ange, wasn't you ever to a clinic before?

ANGELINA [*with an adventurer's smile*]. This is me first.

MAMIE. Been payin' your good money out right along for private doctorin'?

ANGELINA [*commencing to see her mistake*]. Yep.

MAMIE. Gee! That's a crime — and with all the clinics there is.

ANGELINA [*in surprise*]. You ain't been to any others, Mame?

MAMIE. I aint? That's the way to get the best medicine — try 'em till you're suited.

ANGELINA [*looking around*]. That so?

MAMIE [*with the superior air of experience*]. Oh, this ain't so swell! But you get the medicine here — long as you don't bother too much with the talk they hand out with it. Some places it's all talk — nothin' else.

ANGELINA. Do you know many folks comin' here?

MAMIE. Most all of 'em in our block comes to this one.

ANGELINA. An' it don't cost 'em nothin'?

MAMIE. You don't suppose I could dress like this if I was payin' for private doctorin', do you?

ANGELINA [*as the registrar returns*]. You always was some dresser, Mame.

MAMIE. Hush! Here comes his nibs.

FAGAN [*as he crosses the room*]. Here, no loud talkin' there on the benches. [*He crawls into the cage and speaks to the woman waiting.*] Here's your card — it's all reg'lar. Sit down on the bench

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[*pointing to the rear*]. The Professor'll see you shortly.

THE WOMAN [*with some concern*]. It ain't an operation?

FAGAN. How should I know? Sit down. Next!

[*A woman with erect carriage, wearing a rather shabby cloak, which she holds carefully around her, steps to the window.*]

FAGAN. Your card?

[*The WOMAN hands him a postal card.*]

FAGAN. What's this? A postal card? I'm askin' you for your dispensary card.

THE WOMAN [*pointing to the card*]. Read it.

FAGAN [*reading*]. Oh! the Professor sent it to you?

THE WOMAN. It's very inconvenient, but I've come as he asked me.

FAGAN. You can step right in. It's all right.

[*A nurse comes in from the room behind and, looking over the patients' cards, takes MAMIE and ANGELINA back with her.*]

THE WOMAN But I don't understand why he should send for me. I've come here a few times for treatments, because a friend told me it was better than going to a private doctor; but you can see by my clothes that I couldn't afford to pay a doctor, anyway.

FAGAN. Nobody's askin' you to pay.

THE WOMAN. Then why should I be asked to come here today?

FAGAN. How should I know? Maybe you've some int'restin' disease the Professor wants to show the medical students.

THE WOMAN [*drawing herself up*]. You don't

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suppose I'm going to let them undress me and show me off to medical students!!!

FAGAN. Well, maybe it ain't that bad. Go in, anyway, and sit down till the Professor comes.

[THE WOMAN, *rather hesitatingly*, goes to a bench and sits down.]

FAGAN. Next! [*Then looks around and seeing that no one else is waiting, he leans out of the window and closes the small gate in the railing. He then picks up his newspaper and commences to read.*]

MISS DALY [*the dispensary nurse, who has been bringing in some chairs and has just placed the fourth one along the wall*]. Mr. Fagan, can you give me a hand here?

FAGAN [*putting down his paper*]. I can, sure. [*Leaves the booth and goes to her.*] What'll you have?

MISS DALY. We must get that table [*pointing to a wooden table through the door*] into here. Can you manage it?

FAGAN. Easy. [*He goes after the table and brings it in, while MISS DALY directs where it should be placed.*]

MISS DALY [*between the benches and screen*]. We'll have it about here, please.

FAGAN [*as he puts it down*]. And what may ye be doin' all this for? I'm pretty well posted, but they've got me guessin' in this place today.

MISS DALY. Well, these are the orders.

FAGAN. Ain't anything to do with the new Trustee, is it?

MISS DALY [*with surprise*]. The new Trustee?

FAGAN [*cocking his head to one side*]. Ye didn't know about that?

MISS DALY. I guess you don't either.

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FAGAN. Ye never heard of old Storm — the multi-millionaire?

MISS DALY. You're having dreams, Mr. Fagan — that old man's dead and buried.

FAGAN. It's his nephew — heir to the whole fortune — he's the fellow.

MISS DALY. I guess I should have heard of it if they'd gotten a new Trustee.

FAGAN. Do you think I'm feedin' ye? It's only just happened.

MISS DALY. I guess so. Who told you?

FAGAN. It comes straight, all right.

MISS DALY. From whom?

FAGAN [*leaning over and speaking in undertones*]. Young Dr. Talbert — the Professor's brother.

MISS DALY. He told you?

FAGAN. Sure, no! I heard him tellin' it, though. He didn't know any one was around. He said his brother, the Professor, "turned the trick" — his very words.

MISS DALY. Sounds like him.

FAGAN. Ye don't like him much?

MISS DALY. I do not.

FAGAN. Well, you'll not be seein' him around here much longer, I guess.

MISS DALY. It'll be good riddance.

FAGAN. He's goin' to get that job in the wards with Dr. Cleaver.

MISS DALY. I guess not. Dr. Brent is next in line for that position.

FAGAN. Well, he ain't liable to get it, just the same.

MISS DALY. What do you mean?

FAGAN. He ain't got the pull young Talbert has,

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nor he ain't got a thousand dollars to pay for a *good* job in the hospital, either.

MISS DALY. They couldn't put him in over Dr. Brent's head — that wouldn't be fair promotion.

FAGAN. Fair promotion? Ha, ha! but there's more ways o' cookin' a goose than one.

MISS DALY. You didn't hear anything else?

FAGAN [*in a whisper*]. I heard him say all they needed was to get something on Robert Brent, so as to get him out of the way — and then he'd get the job fast enough.

MISS DALY [*earnestly*]. But I don't believe they'll ever find anything irregular with Dr. Brent's work.

FAGAN. But they have — that's the very p'int — and they're intendin' to spring it on him, you bet.

MISS DALY. It can't be true! What have they found?

FAGAN. He's been sendin' patients from here to his private office — so as he could charge 'em a fee. Young Talbert said they could prove it on him, too.

MISS DALY. Dr. Brent's not that kind.

FAGAN [*waving his hand*]. It's probably nothin' more'n a little honest graft — ye kin find it in any dispensary. Lord! I wouldn't hold it against him myself — all the work he does — with nary a cent o' pay for it. [*Looking suddenly around, as a patient comes in.*] Gee! There's another, and it's way past admittin' hour, too.

MAN [*in shirt sleeves and overalls, holding a blood-soaked cloth about his left arm*]. Vere's de Doctor?

FAGAN [*re-entering booth*]. Hold on a minute — what's your name?

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MAN. Can't you see I'm hurt? I want to see de Doctor.

FAGAN [*opening his book*]. What's your name?

MAN. Hermann Klein — but can't you hurry? I'll bleed to death! I'll bleed to death! Mein Gott!

FAGAN [*writing*]. Don't get excited — where do you work?

MAN. Round in Feinblatt's factory.

FAGAN. I thought so — they've got some pretty lively machinery in that there shop. Go in and sit down.

KLEIN. I can't — you got de gate shut.

FAGAN [*leans over and opens the gate*]. There you are. Go in and we'll fix you up. [*To MISS DALY, who is still standing by the table — pointing to KLEIN with his thumb.*] Emergency case. [*Takes up his newspaper again.*]

MISS DALY [*to KLEIN*]. Come this way, please. [*She leads him behind the screen.*] There; sit down on that stool — I'll get the doctor. [*Goes off through the dispensary door and returns almost immediately with DR. BRENT.*]

BRENT [*in white coat with short sleeves, comes up quickly and, taking in the situation at a glance, steps to the side of the operating table*]. Come, let me help you up here.

KLEIN [*as he goes to the table*]. Vat you goin' to do? — cut my arm off?

DR. BRENT [*with encouraging smile*]. Not likely, but we've got to have you where we can fix it. [*He helps KLEIN on the table, and gently puts the injured arm on a rest fixed to the table.*] Now, Miss Daly, — if you'll get the patient ready.

[*He goes to the side table and draws on a pair of*

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rubber gloves, while the nurse deftly uncovers the arm and lays it on a sterilized towel.]

DR. BRENT [*examining the wound*]. That's a nasty wound, and pretty ragged, too. [*to the nurse*] It'll need a few stitches. [*The usual preparation and stitching which takes a few minutes is silently proceeded with until accomplished.*] How did you do it?

KLEIN. Was a new machine.

DR. BRENT [*as he applies the dressing.*] Where do you work?

KLEIN. Round Feinblatt's factory.

MISS DALY. We're getting a good many cases from there.

DR. BRENT. Yes, so I've noticed. This is the third this week, so far.

KLEIN. De foreman told me to come here.

MISS DALY. I guess they send all of them here. Feinblatt's a regular subscriber to the hospital.

DR. BRENT. So he feels privileged.

MISS DALY. Yes, he gives the hospital ten dollars a year, regularly, for what would cost him several thousand dollars if he paid for those his machinery injures.

DR. BRENT. There, — now we're ready for the bandage — I think — [*He applies the bandage. Then, to the patient.*] How does that feel?

KLEIN. It feels goot. Tanks — dat's a fine job.

DR. BRENT. Now, you can get down. Come around here day after tomorrow, and let's see it. If it pains you during the night, come around to where I live and let me see it, and we'll make it comfortable for you.

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KLEIN. Tank you. Vere do you live?

DR. BRENT [*to MISS DALY*]. Write out my number for him, will you please?

MISS DALY. Certainly. [*She writes on a slip of paper and hands it to the patient.*]

DR. BRENT. There — now you can go along.

MISS DALY [*to BRENT as the patient goes out*]. Doctor Brent, may I speak to you for a moment?

DR. BRENT [*looking at her*]. Of course.

MISS DALY. I've heard something today which I think I ought to tell you.

DR. BRENT. About the dispensary?

MISS DALY. About your position here — you may lose it.

DR. BRENT. I've heard they didn't think I was sending enough patients up to the wards.

MISS DALY. It isn't that.

DR. BRENT [*uneasy*]. What is it?

MISS DALY. They think you've been using your position here to make money from the patients — they think you're not honest.

DR. BRENT [*controlling himself*]. They think that, do they? Who told you?

MISS DALY. Perhaps I oughtn't to say how I heard it — but I wanted to put you on your guard.

DR. BRENT. Thank you, thank you very much, Miss Daly. I appreciate it.

MISS DALY. I want to say, too, that I hope it won't — won't turn out so that you'll have to leave the dispensary — it's been a lot different here for all of us who have to work here, since you've been in charge of this department.

DR. BRENT. You're very kind to say that, Miss Daly [*as she leaves him*].

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[JUDITH comes in from door leading to the hospital, looks behind the screen, where BRENT is.]

JUDITH. Oh, there you are, Dr. Brent! I thought I was never going to find you. I'm glad you haven't gone yet. I have something to tell you.

DR. BRENT [*smiling, as he bows*]. Another secret?

JUDITH [*with a little laugh*]. No — it's a message.

DR. BRENT. A message — ?

JUDITH. Yes, from Mr. Storm. He wanted me to tell you that you might see him here at the hospital this afternoon.

DR. BRENT. Peter coming here? Good! I shall be delighted to see him.

JUDITH. Oh! That's just what you mustn't be.

DR. BRENT [*puzzled*]. Mustn't be glad to see him?

JUDITH. That's what he was most particular to have me tell you.

DR. BRENT. What does he mean — do you know? [*not waiting for the answer*] It can't be that he knows.

JUDITH. Knows what?

DR. BRENT. That I'm in trouble here — why I've only just heard reports about it myself.

JUDITH. He told me nothing about your being in any difficulty, Dr. Brent, — but I suspect —

DR. BRENT. Suspect what?

JUDITH. That he knows.

DR. BRENT. What did he say?

JUDITH. He said: Tell Bobby not to be surprised to see me. If I do not speak with him, he will understand why later.

DR. BRENT. By Jove! Isn't that just like him? He's heard something about this thing, and some-

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how or other he's going to jump in and put up a fight for me.

JUDITH [*lighting up*]. Do you think that's what he means to do?

DR. BRENT. I know it! I know *him*. [*Then suddenly dejected.*] Oh, but I wish he hadn't done this — whatever it is. He'll only get hurt himself. There's no use. He can't buck up against a hospital board, with its power and reputation.

JUDITH [*her eyes sparkling*]. Oh! but it *is* splendid of him, isn't it?

DR. BRENT. Yes — but it is no use — no use. I know what they can do in these hospitals if one hasn't influence, — I know.

JUDITH [*sympathetically*]. And without your salary — if you lose your position — it will be pretty hard.

DR. BRENT. Salary? Why doctors don't get paid anything for this work.

JUDITH. You mean you *give* all this time and personal work for nothing?

DR. BRENT. Yes — but I'm not thinking of that — that isn't the point; it's having your professional reputation blackened by your brother doctors — just because they have gotten into *power* — that's what hurts.

MISS DALY [*entering and coming up to BRENT*]. Excuse me, Dr. Brent, — will you see that patient here or shall I take him back? [*pointing to the dispensary*].

DR. BRENT. Here — in a few minutes. [*Then, to JUDITH, as the nurse goes back into the dispensary.*] I don't believe you had better stay around here any longer, for if your father and Mr. Storm should come —

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JUDITH [*bastily*]. Goodness! I never thought of that. Yes, I must go, Dr. Brent [*putting out her hand*]—and I hope everything will come out all right. Indeed I do.

DR. BRENT. Thank you, Miss — Miss [*whispers*] Miller.

[JUDITH *with a pleased little laugh hurries away. After a moment BRENT goes to the man waiting on the bench.*]

DR. BRENT. Will you come this way, please. [*They go behind the screen, BRENT indicating a seat.*] What's your trouble?

[SMITH *leans over and whispers something.*]

DR. BRENT. I see. Then you did not come because of this swelling on your neck [*putting out his hand and feeling it*].

SMITH. Lord, no! That thing has been there as long as I can remember — born with it, I guess. Anyway, it gives me no trouble, and I'm willing to keep it.

DR. BRENT [*feeling it again*]. Well, it's one of the kind that's not apt to give you any trouble, so long as it remains as it is, and you don't mind the looks of it.

SMITH. I don't, — and as I explained, — that's not what I came about.

DR. BRENT [*looking him over*]. But surely, you are not one of the unfortunate class who are driven to seek the aid of charity when in need of a doctor?

SMITH [*with rising dignity*]. I am not a pauper — certainly not — I earn good money. But what difference does that make to you?

DR. BRENT [*rising*]. Because a hospital which is dedicated to the poor — which the city makes free

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from taxes — where the doctors work without recompense — is not the place for *you*, Mr. Smith.

SMITH. Say, Doc. You can cut out that stuff with me. I know the ropes — I know lots of fellows who get treated in these hospitals — and Doc — [*in an undertone*] you needn't worry — savey?

DR. BRENT [*taking the card from him, and pointing to the printed rules on the back of it*]. Just read these rules which apply to dispensary patients, Mr. Smith. [*As SMITH reads, BRENT goes to the instrument table and is busy selecting some things therefrom.*]

[*DR. CLEAVER enters by dispensary door.*]

DR. CLEAVER. Good afternoon, Fagan.

FAGAN. Afternoon, Professor.

DR. CLEAVER. What's the matter with this department of yours, Fagan? — we're not getting enough cases through here for the operating room, these days.

FAGAN. I couldn't say Professor — there's about the same numbers as always — maybe more.

DR. CLEAVER. I see a good many new buildings going up in our neighborhood, here —

FAGAN. And a prosperous lot they are, too. I should say that most that comes in here now could afford to pay for private doctorin' easy enough.

DR. CLEAVER. Yes, yes! But you needn't be too particular about turning them away on that account — we need the material for the students, you understand.

FAGAN. Oh, sure! I understand that. Professor Talbert was tellin' me the same last week. There's some of 'em has bank rolls all right, though — I can see that when they're payin' their ten cents for medicine.

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DR. CLEAVER. Well — not too strict with the rules, Fagan, not too strict. By the way, did any of the patients Dr. Talbert sent for, show up?

FAGAN [*pointing to bench*]. There's two of 'em.

DR. BRENT [*behind the screen, to SMITH*]. Well, Mr. Smith, have you read the rules?

SMITH. Yes, I've read them.

DR. BRENT. Then it's probably plain to you now that you have made a mistake [*leading him to the center of the room and then pointing to the door*]. Good afternoon, sir.

[*He stands waiting to see the patient safely out, — when DR. CLEAVER leaves the booth where he has been speaking to FAGAN.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*almost bumping into patient going out, sees the swelling on his neck, stops him, and calls to BRENT*]. Ah, Dr. Brent! — one moment — here, please.

DR. BRENT [*coming up*]. Good afternoon, Dr. Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER [*taking hold of SMITH, then critically feeling the tumor*]. This is an interesting thing, Doctor. [*Then, to SMITH.*] How long have you had this, my man?

SMITH [*without interest*]. Born with it.

DR. CLEAVER. Humph! Congenital — I thought so. [*Then to SMITH.*] Just step into the other room a minute [*pointing backward*].

[*SMITH, rather dazed by the suddenness of the command, does as he is told.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*to BRENT*]. I'd like to examine that case myself — that's just the condition I've been anxious to meet with for demonstration. I'll dissect that tumor out before the medical students, next Tuesday. See that he is prepared for operation.

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DR. BRENT. Unfortunately I have just discharged him.

DR. CLEAVER. Discharged him?

DR. BRENT. Yes, he is not a charity case.

DR. CLEAVER. Come, Dr. Brent, just what do you mean by that?

DR. BRENT. Simply that he has the means to pay for his care, outside of a dispensary.

DR. CLEAVER [*assuming indifference*]. You see many such?

DR. BRENT. A good many.

DR. CLEAVER [*looking at BRENT's face as he speaks*]. Your office is quite near to the hospital, is it not, Dr. Brent?

DR. BRENT [*returning the gaze*]. It is.

[*A moment's pause.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*with peculiar emphasis*]. Have you finished your work here, Doctor, for the day?

DR. BRENT. I have one more dressing.

DR. CLEAVER. When you have completed that, will you be good enough to hold yourself in readiness to return to this room? I am expecting Mr. Monroe and Dr. Talbert, and we have a little matter which we wish to talk over with you.

DR. BRENT. Very well, sir [*leaves the room*].

[MR. MONROE and DR. TALBERT, *deep in conversation, slowly enter from the hospital.*]

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes! I'm very glad, Talbert, you sent word to Mr. Storm that our meeting would be at four thirty — instead of four.

DR. TALBERT. Yes, upstairs in the Board Room. [*Looking at his watch.*] That gives us fifteen minutes here. Ah, there's Cleaver.

DR. CLEAVER. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

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[*Then, in a lower tone.*] I've been having a little talk with the young man—he's in the other room, waiting.

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes! But do not let us delay the matter—it's unpleasant business—[*turning to DR. TALBERT*—but you advise it, Talbert? You think it is best?

DR. TALBERT [*with his laugh*]. There is no question about that, sir. [*Looking up.*] Oh, by the way—has the evidence arrived?

DR. CLEAVER. *There* are two of them [*pointing to the bench*].

DR. TALBERT. There should be three—I had a man coming, too.

[*At that moment a MAN enters the dispensary door—a firm-featured, fine-looking fellow—of middle age, and plain but neat appearance.*]

THE MAN. My name is Frank Allen. Dr. Talbert sent for me.

DR. TALBERT. Ah! There's my man, now. Come in, sir. I am Dr. Talbert.

ALLEN. Has the electric plant gone wrong? I remember I helped to install it,—but they all need a little fixing now and then.

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! The electricity's all right, I guess, Mr. Allen. We want you to give us a little light of another kind, this time [*goes off into his chuckling laugh*].

ALLEN. What can I do for you?

DR. TALBERT. Sit down on the bench and we'll ask for your assistance in just a few minutes. [*To FAGAN.*] Bring some chairs, Fagan.

FAGAN. Very good, Professor [*goes after the chairs*].

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MR. MONROE [*pointing to benches*]. Perhaps it would be just as well to have these people wait outside until we need them, eh?

DR. TALBERT. I think so, sir. [*In an undertone to FAGAN, who has returned.*] Have them wait outside the room [*pointing to the hospital door*].

FAGAN [*going up to the patients*]. Will you kindly come this way with me, please? [*taking them out as desired*].

DR. TALBERT. Now, gentlemen [*looking around to see that they are alone*]. I don't think there should be any hitch, and I trust we will not find it necessary to question these people, who, I may say, are all patients that have been seen to enter and leave Brent's office.

DR. CLEAVER. How did you manage it?

DR. TALBERT. That was easy — they were seen from across the street — opposite his apartment.

MR. MUNROE. Talbert, as I have observed before, you are a remarkable man — a remarkable man.

DR. TALBERT. Not at all, I simply had anticipated the necessity of the change in our staff. [*Looking at his watch.*] Gentlemen, we must make haste if we are to get this matter out of the way before our new Trustee arrives.

[*With a side look at DR. CLEAVER.*] He might not appreciate the importance of making these little changes as well as our President does.

MR. MONROE. Humph! What's that? What's that?

DR. TALBERT [*to MR. MONROE*]. I say, he might not be able to see the best interests of the hospital as clearly as you do, sir.

MR. MONROE. I see, I see! [*Takes a chair.*] Then, supposing we begin —

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DR. TALBERT [*calling*]. Fagan!

[FAGAN *enters and comes before them.*]

DR. TALBERT. Fagan, ask Dr. Brent to step here.

FAGAN. Very good, Professor [*withdraws*].

MR. MONROE. Talbert, will you act as Chairman?

DR. TALBERT. If you wish, sir. [*He and DR. CLEAVER sit down.*]

DR. CLEAVER [*with something like a grin*]. A good idea, Talbert, as you have made the arrangements.

[DR. BRENT, *having changed to his ordinary clothes, comes before them, and with a somewhat reserved bow, waits to be addressed.*]

MR. MONROE. This is Dr. Brent?

DR. BRENT. Yes, sir.

MR. MONROE. Dr. Brent, it is a very painful duty to have to inform you that the manner in which you have treated the high responsibilities of your position here has come to light.

DR. BRENT. May I ask what you are referring to, sir?

DR. TALBERT. Ah! So there is something besides seeing dispensary patients in your office.

DR. BRENT [*a little excited*]. What! What do you mean, Dr. Talbert?

DR. TALBERT [*assuming a kindly air*]. Now then, Doctor — now then — don't get excited.

DR. BRENT. I should like to know what you are accusing me of.

DR. TALBERT [*blandly*]. Before going into that, and in order to save your professional standing, an alternative has suggested itself to us.

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DR. BRENT. What do you mean?

DR. TALBERT [*turning to the others*]. If this proposal meets your approval, gentlemen, I would suggest that if Dr. Brent should care to just quietly send in his resignation, we might waive any further action in the matter.

MR. MONROE. Yes, yes! [*Nodding his head.*] A very considerate proposal.

DR. CLEAVER [*looking rather anxiously at his watch*]. By all means, — that is a very good idea.

DR. TALBERT [*turning to BRENT*]. What do you say, Dr. Brent?

[*BRENT is just drawing breath to answer, when the door opens and PETER enters.*]

PETER [*to group*]. Good afternoon, gentlemen. Arrived a bit early, so I've been looking around a little before the meeting.

MR. MONROE [*as they all get up rather hastily and, disregarding their present occupation, turn with marked attention to PETER*]. Ah! Good afternoon, Mr. Storm.

DR. TALBERT. So you've been looking over the hospital?

PETER. Just as a casual sightseer.

DR. CLEAVER. And what did you think of our various departments, with our doctors and nurses at work?

PETER. Enthusiasm everywhere — all busy with plans for new growth and progress I see — Most interesting!

DR. CLEAVER [*wishing to be polite, and bowing toward PETER*]. That's all owing to — [*Breaks off in a sudden coughing, as he receives a sharp nudge from DR. TALBERT*].

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DR. TALBERT. Yes, yes! As Cleaver was about to say — that's all owing to — ah — ah — how shall I express it? That singleness of purpose which comes to those who are helping the poor. You always see that at St. Stephen's, Mr. Storm.

DR. CLEAVER [*recovering*]. Exactly! Exactly!

MR. MONROE [*with a smile, grunts*]. Just so! Just so!

PETER. And this is part of the dispensary, I presume?

DR. TALBERT. Yes, but there is nothing further of interest here for the day, as the dispensary work has been finished. So if you would make yourself comfortable in the Trustees' room —

PETER. No, indeed, gentlemen, it is all more interesting to me than you have any idea of — but do not let me keep you standing — I will sit down with you.

MR. MONROE. I think we have come to the end of our meeting here — eh, Talbert?

DR. TALBERT. I think so, sir. [*Then, turning and speaking in an undertone to BRENT.*] All you will have to do is to send it to Mr. Monroe in writing — you understand.

DR. BRENT [*indignantly*]. You mean my resignation? You mean you are asking me to resign?

MR. MONROE [*going up to BRENT*]. If I have heard the facts that will be the easiest way for you, Doctor — take my advice. Yes, just so.

DR. CLEAVER [*close to him*]. We have evidence here, young man — you had better not make a scene.

DR. BRENT [*in a tense tone*]. What evidence?

MR. MONROE [*turning rather apologetically to*

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PETER]. We are very sorry that this matter should have come up on your first day with us. It seems to be one of those cases where kindness and consideration are lost — completely lost.

PETER. Well, I trust my presence here will not interfere with the proper delivery of justice.

DR. CLEAVER. Exactly — exactly! I think we should proceed with this matter and have in the evidence, now that we have begun it.

DR. TALBERT [*to MR. MONROE*]. What is your pleasure in the matter, sir?

MR. MONROE. I am told Mr. Storm, that the Doctor, here, is under the charge of having made use of philanthropy to further his own personal advancement; of having sent the poor patients of this dispensary to his private office in order to charge them money. I do not ask you to form any judgment in the case, however, until after you have heard with us the evidence waiting.

PETER. That sounds to me most reasonable.

DR. TALBERT [*addressing BRENT*]. Dr. Brent, there is a chair behind the screen which you may get. [*BRENT does so.*]

PETER [*as they seat themselves*]. What you say is surprising to me. Do charity hospitals take patients who have money?

MR. MONROE. I am informed that now and then one may get by our careful registrar or our thorough system of investigating the applicants.

PETER. Well, well!

DR. TALBERT [*with papers before him on the table*]. Now, Dr. Brent, what have you to say to the charge? Have you or have you not sent patients from the dispensary to your private office for treatment?

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DR. BRENT. I have.

DR. TALBERT. There, gentlemen, you see that he admits having seen dispensary patients in his office, which though innocent in itself, is hard to believe that a doctor would do unless he could collect money thereby. What is your pleasure? Shall we hear the witnesses?

DR. CLEAVER. Certainly — have 'em in.

DR. TALBERT [*calling*]. Fagan!

FAGAN [*appearing*]. Yes, sir.

DR. TALBERT. Call the first patient.

FAGAN. Very good, Professor. [*He goes out and brings in the scrub woman.*]

DR. TALBERT. Will you come and stand here, my woman? [*Pointing to a place in front of him.*] Now, tell us if you have been a patient at the dispensary.

THE WOMAN. I have, this long time. I got an open ulster on me leg [*stooping over to pull up her skirts*]. Would you like to see it?

MR. MONROE [*horrified, and raising his hands in protest*]. Oh — no — no! That will not be necessary.

THE WOMAN. Then it ain't no operation you're thinkin' of?

DR. TALBERT. No, certainly not, my good woman.

THE WOMAN [*raising her hands and eyes*]. The Lord be praised! Let him be praised!

DR. TALBERT. We want to know if this [*pointing to BRENT*] is the doctor who has attended your case?

THE WOMAN. Yes, sir! He's the one.

DR. TALBERT. And have you ever gone to his private office to be treated?

THE WOMAN. Many times I have!

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DR. TALBERT. Hem — I see. Now tell us how you happened to do that?

THE WOMAN. He lets me come there sometimes in the evenin' when I can't get off to come here in the afternoon.

DR. TALBERT. Exactly! Now, one more question, please. Has any money ever passed between you and the doctor on those occasions?

THE WOMAN. I can't recollect.

DR. TALBERT. Think.

THE WOMAN. You're right — once there did.

DR. TALBERT [*with an expression of satisfaction*]. Ah! When?

THE WOMAN. It was Christmas time — he give me a dollar to buy somethin' for the childer — Lord bless him.

DR. TALBERT [*rather abruptly*]. That will be all. You may go. [*To FAGAN, who stands at the door.*] Fagan, you may bring in the next patient.

[*The SECOND WOMAN is brought in and stands before them.*]

PETER [*with an innocent expression*]. That is very interesting — but I expect I can't understand these things until I've been connected with the hospital longer.

[*There is no answer to this remark, further than a slight lifting of Mr. MONROE's eyebrows.*]

DR. TALBERT. Now, my woman, see if you can answer truthfully the questions I put to you.

SECOND WOMAN. What is it you wish of me?

DR. TALBERT. Have you been a patient at this clinic?

SECOND WOMAN. It was recommended to me by a friend.

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DR. TALBERT [*annoyed*]. Please answer my questions — yes or no — Have you been a patient here?

SECOND WOMAN. Yes.

DR. TALBERT. Is this the doctor [*pointing to BRENT*] who attended you?

SECOND WOMAN. Yes.

DR. TALBERT. Have you ever visited his private office?

SECOND WOMAN. Yes.

DR. TALBERT. Now explain to us, please, how you happened to go there.

SECOND WOMAN. The Doctor said the hospital didn't have an instrument he needed, so he asked me to go to his office where he could make the necessary test.

DR. TALBERT. I see! You paid him, of course, for the examination?

SECOND WOMAN. I offer — I can't afford to pay a doctor.

DR. TALBERT. Did you or did you not pay him anything?

SECOND WOMAN. No. I did offer to pay him, but he refused to take anything.

[*Pause.*]

PETER [*takes a small handkerchief from his pocket and goes up to the woman*]. Excuse me, but is this yours?

SECOND WOMAN. Why, yes! Thank you!

PETER. You dropped it in the street. You were some little distance in front of me at the time.

SECOND WOMAN. Really —

PETER. You had just gotten out of your motor around the corner. I wasn't quite sure of you, at

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first when I saw you here — because you hadn't this old cloak on then [*which he gently lifts from her shoulders, showing a handsome fur coat beneath. He goes quietly back to his chair and sits down.*]

[*An embarrassing silence ensues.*]

MR. MONROE [*calling*]. Fagan! Fagan!

FAGAN [*coming up*]. Yes, sir! Yes, Mr. Monroe.

MR. MONROE [*angrily*]. How comes it that you admitted a patient to our clinic here whom you should have seen was practicing an abuse of our charity?

FAGAN. If you please, sir — she must have got rich quick, then — for until this very day she was as poor as any of the “material” — that's what the Professor calls 'em — you'll want to see. I could swear to that, sir!

DR. TALBERT [*under masterly control*]. Fagan, see the woman out.

[*Another awkward pause follows.*]

PETER [*still innocently*]. I've often wondered how charity hospitals were managed. It's different from anything else, isn't it?

[*No one seems to hear PETER's remark, or care to answer it, as they sit with stony faces, looking straight ahead — all except BRENT, whose expression of polite attention remains unchanged.*]

FAGAN [*in a hesitating way, goes up to DR. TALBERT*]. Would you care to see the other patient, Professor?

DR. TALBERT [*with a desperate look on his face*]. Certainly, Fagan, — show him in.

[*FRANK ALLEN is brought before them.*]

DR. TALBERT. Now, my man — Allen, you say your name is, I believe.

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FRANK ALLEN. And Talbert is your name, I think you said.

DR. TALBERT. *Dr.* Talbert is my name — that is correct.

FRANK ALLEN. And *Mr.* Allen is my name.

DR. TALBERT [*with a laugh*]. Very well, Mr. Allen. Now, will you be kind enough, Mr. Allen, to tell these gentlemen if you know this young man [*pointing to BRENT*].

FRANK ALLEN. I certainly do, — that is Dr. Robert Brent.

DR. TALBERT. Have you ever been to his office for treatment?

FRANK ALLEN. I have.

DR. TALBERT. Have you ever paid him money for his services?

FRANK ALLEN. I have. Cash each time.

DR. TALBERT [*to BRENT*]. You have received money from this patient?

DR. BRENT. I have.

DR. TALBERT [*with an expression of finality, and spreading his hands before him*]. Gentlemen, the evidence is before you.

DR. BRENT. Excuse me — but may I say a word?

DR. TALBERT [*in resounding tones*]. The examination is finished. The word of this last dispensary patient [*pointing to ALLEN*] —

FRANK ALLEN [*stepping quickly to DR. TALBERT and leaning toward him*]. Me! A dispensary patient! Where did you get that?

DR. TALBERT. You come to this dispensary, don't you?

FRANK ALLEN. Yes, — to fix the electric light.

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DR. TALBERT [*aghast*]. You're not a dispensary patient?

FRANK ALLEN. If you think I'm the kind to ask favors of charity, you've made a mistake.

[DR. TALBERT, DR. CLEAVER, and MR. MONROE look at each other in silence for what seems several minutes but is in reality only a few seconds.]

DR. TALBERT [*holding himself well — with a conciliatory manner*]. Well, Allen — perhaps there has been some little mistake.

[MR. MONROE and DR. CLEAVER sit anxiously forward in their seats.]

FRANK ALLEN [*leaning still nearer to DR. TALBERT and raising his voice*]. Some little mistake — yes, I think so! And now that I come to think of it, — who told you that you could pry into my affairs this way?

MR. MONROE [*with the suggestion of a smile*]. Tut, tut, my man, we can hear you quite well.

DR. TALBERT [*to ALLEN*]. Look here, sir — do you know before whom you are speaking?

FRANK ALLEN. Certainly, I do. That's Mr. Monroe, President of this Hospital —

DR. TALBERT. Yes, sir! Mr. Monroe, who is known for his charity from one end of this great city to the other.

FRANK ALLEN. Of course he is — who said he wasn't? He pays for it.

DR. TALBERT. Do you imply, sir, that giving money for the poor isn't good? Why the rich have always helped the poor —

FRANK ALLEN. Yes — to keep poor. [*Pause.*] This is all very interesting, gentlemen, but I'm afraid I'll not be able to give you any more of my time this

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afternoon. [*As he stalks out.*] In the future, I'd thank you not to confuse me with your charity patients.

PETER [*as ALLEN slams the door*]. My! That man has a direct way of speaking, — hasn't he?

MR. MONROE [*tapping the table nervously*]. Yes, quite so, quite so.

FAGAN [*coming in*]. There's some one would like to speak with Mr. Storm on the telephone.

PETER. Who is it?

FAGAN. Mr. Underhill — he said his name was [*withdraws from the room*].

PETER. Underhill — he's one of the executors of my uncle's estate. Gentlemen, will you excuse me? — where's the telephone?

DR. TALBERT [*to BRENT*]. Dr. Brent, will you show Mr. Storm the way to the telephone?

DR. BRENT [*getting up and leading the way through the hospital door*]. This way, please. [PETER follows.]

[*Left alone MR. MONROE, DR. TALBERT and DR. CLEAVER look for a moment at each other in constrained silence.*]

MR. MONROE. Most unfortunate, gentlemen, most unfortunate.

DR. CLEAVER [*disgustedly*]. As Mr. Monroe has observed, Talbert you are a remarkable man — a remarkable man.

DR. TALBERT [*losing his temper*]. Good Lord, Cleaver! You needn't throw it up to me — I never expected to bring those people in here to testify. You proposed it.

MR. MONROE. Come, come, gentlemen! What's best to be done now — that's the question; and it must be decided quickly.

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DR. CLEAVER [*pushing back his chair*]. Better table it for further consideration, and close the meeting.

MR. MONROE. Never do, gentlemen, never do. Leave too bad a taste in Mr. Storm's mouth when he comes to think it over.

PETER [*coming in, with his hand on BRENT'S shoulder — puts on a serious expression, and speaks in a low but audible voice*]. Of course, of course, Bobby, old man — but you must leave the matter with these gentlemen. [*The intended effect is produced, as MR. MONROE, DR. TALBERT and DR. CLEAVER take in the situation of friendship, with gasping amazement, as PETER addresses them.*] I shall be interested to hear your decision in Dr. Brent's case, gentlemen — I was very sorry to be called away at just that moment.

DR. CLEAVER [*with ill-controlled wonder*]. Dr. Brent is a friend of yours, Mr. Storm?

PETER. One of my oldest and best — we were friends at school. Didn't Dr. Talbert tell you?

DR. TALBERT. I?

PETER [*looking in DR. TALBERT'S direction*]. Why, it was on Bobby's account that I connected myself with St. Stephen's.

MR. MONROE. Eh? What's that?

PETER. You can understand that I am almost as anxious as Dr. Brent is himself to hear the result of this meeting.

DR. TALBERT [*recovering himself*]. Yes, exactly so. Dr. Brent is too able a man not to receive advancement, now that this little matter is cleared away — eh, Cleaver?

DR. CLEAVER. Of course, Talbert, and I was just

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wondering if he would care to be Assistant Professor in Surgery.

DR. BRENT [*hardly grasping the turn of the tide*]. Are you speaking of me?

DR. TALBERT [*biding his annoyance*]. Certainly — certainly, Dr. Brent. You should not spend all your days here in the dispensary.

PETER [*to BRENT*]. You see, Bobby, what comes to those who work hard [*taking BRENT's hand and shaking it*]. Let me be the first to congratulate you. [*Then, turning to the others.*] Do any of you happen to know Mr. Underhill, my uncle's executor?

DR. TALBERT. Ha, ha! Clarence Underhill — a queer little man — of course I know him — very exact — very precise.

PETER. Exactly, — that's the very man, — always so very particular about details — that's the man. Well, what do you suppose he called me up to tell me? [*They all lean forward in tense inquiry.*] That my uncle had left more — much more money than they had at first supposed; that now he had the *exact* figures [*they bend a little closer*]; that now my annual income from the estate would amount to — sixty-two dollars and fifty cents — [*Smiling as he leans on the table and looks from one set face to the other.*] Now, isn't that just like Underhill?

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE. — *Same as Act I.*

TIME. — *Following morning.*

PETER *is sitting at his desk with JUDITH beside him, quietly working. One at a time, she passes him sheets of MS., which he takes and looks over critically.*

JUDITH [*suddenly looking up*]. You know it *was* splendid — what you did for your friend, Dr. Brent.

PETER. I simply let them go on with their mistake of thinking I was rich — very rich — that's all — until ——

JUDITH. Until what?

PETER [*laughing*]. Well, until they made a professor — or something of that kind — of Bobby. Now, if he wants to get out, he won't be landed on the scrap heap, — you understand.

[*They work on quietly for a few minutes, without speaking.*]

PETER. Oh, here is something which needs a slight correction [*looking at JUDITH*]. I wonder if you could reach that red book? [*Then, with a smile.*] No, I think I had better get it myself. [*Suiting his action to his words — goes to the book-case and brings the book to the desk. Opening it, he proceeds to make some notes on the sheet in front of him. They again work on quietly for a few minutes without speaking. Then looking up with a smile, PETER asks,* And how is the injured arm getting on?

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JUDITH [*responding with a little laugh*]. Hardly feel it [*holding it out*] — see, the swelling is all gone, and everything.

PETER [*taking her hand and looking wise, as he inspects her wrist*]. Now, if I were a doctor, I suppose I'd tell you just what a very —

JUDITH [*making no effort to release herself*]. Let go!

PETER [*still holding her hand, looks up at her, and speaking very quietly*]. Tell me, why didn't you want me to recognize you, when you came here?

JUDITH [*releasing herself as she jumps up and takes two or three steps back, in her surprise*]. You knew?

PETER [*sits smiling at her*].

JUDITH. Why didn't you tell me right away?

PETER. Couldn't.

JUDITH [*a little breathless*]. Why?

PETER. Didn't know you *right away*.

JUDITH [*the corners of her mouth drooping a little*]. Do you remember all those years ago, when the steamer landed and we said good-bye?

PETER [*going and standing near her*]. Of course I remember.

JUDITH. And I said, then, you would probably forget all about me — and *now* you see you did.

PETER. Are you sure?

JUDITH. What else can I think? — [*They look at each other for a moment in silence*] You said you would write —

PETER. And you said you would answer — if — if you still cared — [*He stops speaking, as she turns away from him and puts her hands up to her face. They stand thus for a minute or two — when she turns and faces him again — her eyes very bright.*]

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JUDITH. I never heard — [*They stand for a moment, numbed; not trusting themselves to look at each other, when she suddenly looks up.*] But the other day, when I came here —

PETER. So many years, and you have changed.

JUDITH [*shaking her head, sadly*]. I am just the same.

PETER [*slowly drawing out his pocket book and taking from it a small kodak picture*]. Look at this [*handing it to her*].

JUDITH [*after studying it a moment — with a little note of amusement coming into her voice*]. Oh, that funny old-fashioned dress — and my hair, all plastered back! It's too funny!

PETER. It's plain enough.

JUDITH [*quickly*]. What did you say?

PETER [*smiling*]. That you've changed some.

[JUDITH, *her eyes wide — her face half puzzled, half amused, stands regarding him.*]

PETER [*holding out his hand*]. If you please?

[JUDITH *looks at him*].

PETER. The picture, please?

JUDITH [*handing it to him*]. Oh!

PETER [*carefully putting it back*]. Thank you.

[*Pause.*]

JUDITH [*her eyes widening, and speaking slowly*]. And you have kept that there [*putting out her hand and touching his breast pocket*] all the time?

PETER [*smiling*]. Well, you know how those things will stick around in a man's pocket, sometimes.

JUDITH [*with a happy laugh*]. Do you know, you haven't changed a bit.

PETER [*taking her quickly in his arms*]. No, — not a bit.

JUDITH [*after a minute*]. Some one may come in.

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PETER. Come [*leading her by the hand*]. I'll show you another old-fashioned picture, if you'd like to see it? — my father and mother, this time.

JUDITH [*smiling and happy as they go into the sitting room*]. And will you tell me all about them, too?

[*A moment or two — and the door from the hall opens, and MRS. FOSTER comes in, followed by MR. MONROE and DR. TALBERT.*]

MRS. FOSTER [*turning to the two gentlemen*]. Will you take a seat? I'll see if Mr. Storm's in. [*She goes into the sitting room, but comes out again, almost immediately.*] Mr. Storm's very busy, just this minute — but if you'll wait — ?

MR. MONROE [*rather irritated*]. Yes, yes! We will wait.

[*MRS. FOSTER looks at MR. MONROE for a few seconds, then starts to leave the room — when she stops again to stare at him.*]

MR. MUNROE [*noticing her gaze — looks questioningly at her*]. Well, well! [*In an annoyed tone.*] What is it?

MRS. FOSTER [*flurried, as one suddenly awakened*]. Oh! Oh! I beg pardon [*turns and hurries from the room into the hall*].

MR. MONROE [*with a puzzled look*]. Did you notice the way that old woman stared at us, Talbert?

DR. TALBERT. I didn't notice she paid any particular attention to me [*tapping his forehead with his fingers*]. Not hittin' on all six, I guess, that's her trouble.

MR. MONROE [*casting a side look at TALBERT*]. Humph! Very likely — very likely! Well, it's a nice outfit — this you've introduced to St. Stephen's, Talbert! Yes, a nice outfit.

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DR. TALBERT. Good Lord! How could a man know that old Storm's estate would pan out as it did?

MR. MONROE [*getting up, and walking up and down*]. A nice mess we're in — a nice mess all around — giving young Brent the Assistant Professorship, too.

DR. TALBERT [*getting up also*]. But didn't you say that he'd resigned? That you received a letter from him this morning?

MR. MONROE [*suppressing a smile*]. Yes [*then drawing a letter from his pocket and holding it out to DR. TALBERT*]. Here, — you'd better read it.

DR. TALBERT [*taking the letter and reading aloud*]. "Dear Sir: — Since I believe I can give better service to the poor people by being *their* friend instead of yours, I hereby resign from the position of Assistant Professor, lately conferred upon me by your Board." [*Looking up and handing letter back*]. Bah! Soft rot! I'm glad he's out — but there's one thing — he's not the kind to give us further trouble. That's fortunate.

MR. MONROE [*pushing the letter back to DR. TALBERT, and keeping a steady face*]. Here — there's more of the soft stuff you've missed — on the other half of the sheet.

[DR. TALBERT, *as if to humor him, takes the letter again and reads on in silence, while MR. MONROE watches his face change expression as he first flushes, then pales — finally crushing the letter in his hands.*]

MR. MONROE [*taking letter from him*]. Did you get as far as this, Talbert? [*smoothing it out and reading aloud*] "And since I have evidence of the manner in which Dr. Talbert attempted to remove

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me, so that he could use his influence to advance his brother without further hindrance, I prefer to sever my relations with the staff in order that I may better give my attention to bringing his action to public notice and its proper punishment.

DR. TALBERT [*white with rage*]. Punishment! What insolence!

MR. MONROE. A bit awkward, Talbert, eh?

DR. TALBERT [*still hot*]. We'll have him put out of the County Society. Then who'll listen to him? Ha, ha!

MR. MONROE. We?

DR. TALBERT. Certainly, the Medical Board of St. Stephen's.

MR. MONROE. I'm not so sure *that* will be the policy I shall care to have the hospital adopt.

DR. TALBERT [*taken aback*]. You mean you'll not stand behind me?

MR. MONROE. Just so, Talbert. Yes, just so.

DR. TALBERT [*sarcastically*]. Perhaps you don't realize the importance, in a business way, charity is to a man in your position.

MR. MONROE. Perhaps not, Talbert, perhaps not.

DR. TALBERT [*coming closer and in a lower tone*]. If it wasn't for Christianity and charity, some of the biggest business this country has ever seen couldn't have been pulled off. [*Then in a confidential manner.*] It's fortunate for some of you rich men that the public don't *see* that.

MR. MONROE. Humph, Talbert, it's fortunate for the public, that some rich men — decent rich men — are commencing to see it.

DR. TALBERT. Well, I don't propose having my name dragged out before the town, if I can stop it.

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MR. MONROE. Better if you'd thought of that before you brought this young doctor's friend, Storm, into the affair of the hospital.

DR. TALBERT. I can't see that the hospital's any worse off than it was before, for that.

MR. MONROE [*raising his brows*]. No worse off! Suppose he should give an account of *that* meeting to the newspapers?

DR. TALBERT. He? Not likely!

MR. MONROE. He's a writer—that's his business—and the papers would pay well for what he knows.

DR. TALBERT. My God! I never thought of that!

MR. MONROE. Well, Talbert, what I want to know is: have you thought of how you're going to get him off the Board?

MRS. MONROE [*sweeping in*]. Am I to wait down in that motor all day?

MR. MONROE [*annoyed by the interruption*]. Yes, my dear, yes, — ah — ah — that is — until we have finished our business here.

MRS. MONROE. Haven't you seen him yet?

MR. MONROE. Not yet, not yet.

MRS. MONROE [*turning to DR. TALBERT with fine sarcasm*]. Well, Doctor, have you decided how he is to be relieved of his duties on the Board of Trustees?

DR. TALBERT. We can't very well tell him that as he hasn't any money he's no use to the hospital, and without money, we'll have to close up — yet that's about the size of it. —

MR. MONROE. Humph! Talbert, is that the best you can do?

MRS. MONROE. *Well*, my husband and I know a *very good* reason why he should not be connected

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with St. Stephen's Hospital, or any other respectable institution.

MR. MONROE [*astonished*]. I, my dear?

MRS. MONROE [*virtuously drawing herself up*]. Certainly, William. Have you forgotten what happened on the occasion of our last visit here?

MR. MONROE. Eh, my dear, what was that?

MRS. MONROE [*with outraged dignity as she points toward the sitting room door*]. What sort of woman would it be that he would have to conceal in that room there, from you and me — his visitors?

MR. MONROE [*turns his head away and puts his hand to his mouth to conceal a smile*]. Of course, of course, my dear, — what sort of a woman could it have been?

MRS. MONROE [*turning to DR. TALBERT*]. You know that kind.

DR. TALBERT [*putting up his hands*]. I, madam, I am a physician.

MRS. MONROE [*her nose in the air*]. No, of course, you wouldn't know. William [*turning to her husband*], I mean to tell Mr. Storm that *I* will no longer be President of the Ladies' Auxiliary at the Hospital if *he* remains upon our Board of Trustees. The other ladies will resign also.

DR. TALBERT. I don't think there would be any objection to that.

[MRS. MONROE, *turns quickly to DR. TALBERT, as if to pierce him by a look — when the door of the sitting room is opened and PETER enters, closing the door behind him.*]

PETER [*with surprise*]. Didn't know that I had callers [*Bowing.*] Won't you sit down?

MR. MONROE [*clears his throat*].

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DR. TALBERT [*clears his throat*].

MRS. MONROE [*remains silent, but takes a step forward*].

PETER [*looking off*]. It's a beautiful day, isn't it?

MR. MONROE. I — ah — I —

DR. TALBERT [*taking a step or two forward*]. Yes, exactly.

MRS. MONROE [*drawing herself up*]. The truth is, Mr. Storm, that when my husband and Dr. Talbert asked you to take part in the Christian work which we are all trying so faithfully to follow at St. Stephen's, we had no doubts as to the moral side of your character.

MR. MONROE [*assuming great dignity*]. Precisely. Precisely.

PETER [*politely, to MRS. MONROE*]. Almost any one in these days ought to be grateful for that consideration.

MRS. MONROE [*ignoring his reply*]. I do not know, Mr. Storm, whether it is a constant practice of yours to have young women visiting your rooms; but the other day, when we called, you had hidden in *that* room [*pointing to sitting room*] a young woman whom you were most anxious should not be seen.

PETER. Well, not at that moment.

MRS. MONROE. Ah, I thought so! Then you admit it? Well, all I have to say is that no respectable woman [*she is interrupted as the sitting room door is partly opened, and a voice calls*] Where have you gone, Peter?

[*Then, after a moment's pause, as no answer comes, the door is pushed wide open, and JUDITH steps peering into the room. In the tense silence which ensues, it*

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is hard to tell from the faces of MRS. MONROE on the one side, or JUDITH on the other, as she stands by the door, upon whom consternation has laid the heavier hand.]

DR. TALBERT [*breaking the silence, but not the tension*]. Well, I'll be ——! [*Walks to the table and picks up a book.*]

[*This is followed by another silence, during which MRS. MONROE directs a look toward PETER.*]

PETER [*politely, and not allowing the vestige of a smile to escape, as he inclines his head slightly*]. I am sorry, I am afraid your daughter's coming in just then interrupted something you especially wished to speak of.

MRS. MONROE [*breaking out angrily, to PETER*]. Was it — was it then my daughter's voice which I heard in that room? [*Turning to her husband, without waiting for a reply.*] William, have you nothing to say?

MR. MONROE [*pulling himself together*]. Yes — yes, — my dear, of course.

MRS. MONROE. Then why don't you begin?

MR. MONROE. Judith, my dear, will you tell us what this means?

MRS. MONROE [*pointing to PETER*]. You had better ask *him*.

MR. MONROE. Yes, my dear, one moment — one moment. [*Turning to JUDITH.*] Can you tell us?

JUDITH. If I had thought you would have been interested, Papa, I should have told you before — before I started to work.

MRS. MONROE. To work?

MR. MONROE. To work, — eh? Ah, I see!

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JUDITH. Why, yes, I had to have *something* to do — and Mr. Storm has given me a position as his secretary.

MRS. MONROE [*severely*]. And how long have you been coming here?

JUDITH [*counting on her fingers*]. This is my third day.

MRS. MONROE [*to PETER with cutting sarcasm*]. Mr. Storm, when does a secretary customarily begin to call her employer by his first name?

PETER. I'm afraid in these days, it would be hard to get a satisfactory answer to that question, Mrs. Monroe.

MRS. MONROE [*turning as if on a pivot toward JUDITH*]. You had better get your hat and coat on now. Never mind about fixing your hair.

[JUDITH, *with some embarrassment, puts her hands up to her head.*]

PETER. With your permission, we will not finish work quite so early in the day as this.

MR. MONROE. Mr. Storm, the idea of my daughter working is absurd. Humph! Yes, quite so, quite so.

JUDITH. If you and Mama don't mind my saying so, Papa, I think I will stay here — that is, if Mr. Storm wishes me to — if he needs me.

PETER [*with a smile to JUDITH*]. Thank you.

MRS. MONROE [*flushing angrily*]. Mr. Storm, there seems to be some understanding between you and my daughter which it would be just as well for her father and me to be acquainted with.

PETER. Yes, — I think so.

MR. MONROE. Eh! What's that? What's that?

MRS. MONROE. May I inquire how long you have known my daughter?

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PETER. Some years.

MRS. MONROE [*in astonishment*]. Some years?

JUDITH [*beginning to enjoy the situation*]. Yes, Mama. We met on the steamer, going to Europe.

MRS. MONROE. You never said anything about this to me?

JUDITH [*sweetly*]. I don't think I ever knew you well enough to speak of such things, Mama.

MRS. MONROE [*losing her head a little*]. Children of *this* generation, it seems to me, are born without any respect for their parents.

PETER. And of every generation, for that matter, as respect is inspired, not inherited.

MRS. MONROE [*drawing herself up*]. Mr. Storm, did you intend that to be a personal allusion.

PETER [*quietly*]. Unfortunately, it is a law and not an allusion.

MRS. MONROE [*trying on an air of finality*]. Come, Judith, get on your things.

JUDITH [*drawing herself up*]. I intend to remain here, Mama.

MR. MONROE. Judith, perhaps you had better do as your mother — yes, yes, just so.

JUDITH. I am sorry, Papa — but I, — I, —

MRS. MONROE [*angrily*]. What hold has this man over you?

JUDITH [*with a twinkle*]. I think it is because he is so rich, Mama.

MRS. MONROE. Rich! You don't know what you are talking about, child! That's the same mistake Dr. Talbert made when he got him into the hospital! Why, *he* hasn't any money — *he* isn't rich.

JUDITH [*shaking her head*]. I don't mean rich the

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way you mean it, Mama. I mean he is rich in character — not cash.

PETER [*to JUDITH*]. As soon as my new book is published, I shall certainly advance you to the position of press agent.

JUDITH [*with a smile*]. You and Papa must each buy Mr. Storm's new book, which gives all the latest fads on how to make poor people profitable through private charity.

PETER. But it is bound to be a little delayed now, until the chapter on my present experience as a hospital trustee is finished.

DR. TALBERT [*forcing a laugh as he steps quickly forward*]. What's this — what's this? — some literary joke, I suppose.

PETER. That's it Doctor, exactly — but this time the joke won't be at the expense of the unfortunate.

[*MRS. MONROE and DR. TALBERT are doing their best to cover their perplexity when MRS. FOSTER enters the room and addresses PETER.*]

MRS. FOSTER. Mr. Peter, your friend Dr. Brent is here to see you — out in the hall.

PETER. Ask him to come in.

MRS. FOSTER. In here? Not if you should see him.

PETER. Why not?

MRS. FOSTER. He's just covered [*illustrating with a gesture*] from head to foot with dirt. A street accident, he said.

PETER [*starting for the door*]. He's not hurt, Fossie?

MRS. FOSTER. Bless you! It wasn't him — it was some poor fellow he crawled in after, so as to help 'im out.

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BRENT'S VOICE [*from the hall as MRS. FOSTER goes out*]. Say, Peter! Got a rake or vacuum cleaner or anything of that sort handy? I'm a sight.

PETER [*going to the door*]. Hold on a minute, Bobby! I think I can find you something [*then turning to those in the room*]. Excuse me, just a moment, please. [*He hurries across the room and through sitting room door.*]

BRENT'S VOICE. Never mind! I've found a broom — I guess that will do! [*A brushing and beating can be heard — then a pause.*] Lord, Peter! Shall you ever forget that meeting at the hospital yesterday? [*more beating*] And their faces — when — they — saw — we — were friends? [*Violent beating outside. Exchange of glances inside.*] Did you see old Talbert's face go green? [*Beating.*] And our great surgeon — Oh! Oh! [*More beating.*] I'll remember the look which came into his face to my dying day. [*More beating, as MR. MONROE and DR. TALBERT look at each other, and PETER returns with a brush in his hand. Then BRENT's voice is heard coming closer.*] I can tell you, Peter, after that little episode I've just had outside, coming in here is like descending into a peaceful and smiling valley. [*With broom in hand, comes into the doorway — !*]

PETER. Hello, Bobby! Come in. [*Dead silence.*] You know every one here, I think? [*Turning to MRS. MONROE.*] Mrs. Monroe, you know my friend, Dr. Brent?

MRS. MONROE [*turning her back on Dr. Brent*]. I have not that pleasure.

DR. BRENT [*leaning on broom*]. We — er — Good morning.

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MR. MONROE [*suppressing a smile and making ready to go*]. I think we will leave Dr. Talbert here with you, Mr. Storm, — he will be able to explain our little errand to you. Ah, quite so, quite so.

MRS. MONROE. And I wish to say, that I propose to have my daughter discontinue this partnership.

PETER [*stepping forward*]. And I have proposed to her — to continue it — indefinitely.

JUDITH. And I — [*she gives a little laugh*].

MRS. MONROE [*to PETER*]. You're not serious?

PETER. Not often, — but *this* time I *am*.

MRS. MONROE. But how can you ever give my daughter what *we* have given her?

PETER. Heaven forbid that I should! [*then after a moment*] But, of course I shouldn't urge any one to give up their parents too lightly, for I —

JUDITH [*breaking in*]. Oh, it was dreadful! I have seen their pictures, and they had such wonderful faces — so hopeful and so happy. Peter was standing between them — he was only about so [*holding her hand out as she stoops over*] high. [*Then, looking at PETER and laughing.*] What a funny little fellow you were.

MRS. MONROE. Accident?

PETER [*walking slowly toward the window, as if to get away from the memory*]. N-o, — Incident. [*Looking out of the window.*]

JUDITH. It was something they do in business that was the beginning of it — Oh, I can't explain it just exactly — it's like a big bully in school who just uses his strength to satisfy his greed — any way, they just used their money, and the power it gave them, to drive him out of business, so that they could get it. That's how he lost everything.

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DR. TALBERT. That don't kill people.

JUDITH. After that he was so discouraged he became ill — desperately ill — with a bad fever.

DR. TALBERT. Ah! there's where our charity hospitals are useful.

JUDITH. He wouldn't go to the hospital.

DR. TALBERT. Wouldn't go to the hospital?

JUDITH. No, he wouldn't go and accept help from the man who took away all he had, and who had built the hospital out of the profits he got that way — and it was this man who really *killed* Peter's father — indeed it was — and caused his mother's death, too.

MRS. MONROE. Judith, my dear, we can't blame any one man, or call him names, for things of that sort, — it's simply a part of our social and business system.

DR. BRENT [*vehemently*]. If that happened to me, I think I'd like to connect up with the gentleman who ran *that* particular social and business system.

JUDITH [*to PETER*]. Do you know the name of the man?

PETER. No. I would rather not know — for I have often thought that if he were still alive and I should meet him face to face [*passing his hand over his forehead*]. No, no! I should rather never know.

[MRS. FOSTER comes in with an expression of triumph on her face and crosses the room to PETER, holding a newspaper, yellow with age, in her hand, which she presses into his hands, whispering something at the same time.]

PETER. Yes, yes — later I'll read it if it would please you, Fossie. I'm busy now.

MRS. FOSTER [*in an excited whisper*]. I've been huntin' it all mornin'. I knew I had it somewhere.

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PETER. Very well, I'll read it later — but you mustn't disturb me now.

MRS. FOSTER. But it's important, Mr. Peter! Look at it!

PETER [*looking at the date*]. Why, it's dated twenty-three — twenty-four — twenty-five years ago. I guess there can't be any great hurry about news that old.

MRS. FOSTER [*her hand trembling, as she points excitedly toward MR. MONROE*]. But it's about him!

PETER. Very likely, Fossie. Mr. Monroe has been very prominent for years.

MRS. FOSTER. I knew this mornin', when I got a good look at him — I knew it was him.

MR. MONROE [*moving closer and putting on his glasses*]. Humph! What's this — let me see [*moving as if to take the paper*].

MRS. FOSTER [*grasping the paper quickly, and holding it behind her*]. No, sir! It's for Mr. Peter to read I brought it.

JUDITH. It's something about Papa? [*holding out her hand.*] May I read it, Mrs. Foster?

MRS. FOSTER [*hesitates a moment, then hands the paper to JUDITH*]. Yes, you can read it, Miss. Read it out loud, so Mr. Peter can hear it — can hear every word of it. [*She steps between JUDITH and MR. MONROE, to avoid any danger of losing the paper.*]

JUDITH [*goes where she can get the light from the window*]. Oh, it was printed before I was born [*as she looks at the date*].

MRS. FOSTER [*stepping up to her and pointing*]. There it is — read that.

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JUDITH [*indicating the first column*]. Is this it—here?

MRS. FOSTER [*peering over the paper*]. Yes, that's it, Miss. Read there.

JUDITH [*reading*]. ANOTHER TRUST VICTIM. Leonard Storm, one of our leading citizens, dies in poverty. Our readers will be reminded of Mr. Storm's business collapse a few months ago, after his brief but brave fight to withstand the powerful pressure when the screws were applied by the Monroe Trust, of which Mr. W. T. Monroe, the noted philanthropist, is the President, — [*breaking off and looking away in the distance*]. Oh, oh! And that is the way we became so rich! [*Sinking down in a near-by chair, and burying her face in her hands.*]

PETER [*stepping up to MR. MONROE, speaks slowly and distinctly*]. So you are the man! — At last we do come face to face! [*The others seem to stiffen with anxious tensivity as PETER, staring into the man's face, pauses —*]

JUDITH [*suddenly running forward*]. Peter! Peter!

PETER [*seemingly deaf, goes on slowly to MR. MONROE*]. You little thought to meet Leonard Storm's son?

MR. MONROE [*adjusting himself a little after this sudden turn of events*]. Ah, oh, Humph! Can't say that I have been expecting it.

PETER. And what have you to say?

MR. MONROE. Ah, humph! yes, just so — what have I to say? Ah, just so.

PETER [*exasperated*]. The report is plain.

MR. MONROE. Yes, it is plain, very. I recollect it. Humph!

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PETER. And perhaps recollect your name and place in it?

MR. MONROE. Eh, eh? My name. What's that?

PETER. Your name.

MR. MONROE. No, not my name — my name. Ah, just so, just so.

PETER [*almost shouting*]. Not your name? W. T. Monroe!

MR. MONROE. Unfortunate, that, — yes, very. Often confused that way before he died. Just so, — humph! His name was Walter.

MRS. MONROE [*stepping up*]. Your cousin Walter! Was that your cousin Walter?

MR. MONROE. Humph! Yes, yes, my dear.

MRS. MONROE. The one they always said looked like you?

[PETER looks with amazement from one to the other, while DR. TALBERT, DR. BRENT and JUDITH shift their positions with their increasing interest.]

MR. MONROE. Humph! Yes, that was Walter.

MRS. MONROE. I remember. The one you always said was a scalawag.

MR. MONROE. Eh, yes. Tush, my dear, tush. We don't need to make that public.

PETER [*with some surprise, addressing MR. MONROE*]. Then it was not you?

MR. MONROE. Committed a good many offenses in my day — guess I'm far from perfect yet —

JUDITH. Oh, I am so glad! So glad!

MR. MONROE [*looking at her*]. Eh, what's that my dear, — what's that? — was saying — guess I ain't perfect yet, but, humph! but always tried to play fair accordin' to my lights, — yes, just so, just so.

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PETER [*turning to* MRS. FOSTER]. Fossie, I guess you can burn that old paper [*then turning to* MR. MONROE, *as* MRS. FOSTER *leaves*]. I'm sorry about this, very sorry. And I offer you my apology, sir.

MR. MONROE [*putting out his hand, which* PETER *quickly takes, grunts*]. If you've got any more old papers, file 'em away in the same fire. Humph! Guess you won't hurt Walter's feelin's; he's used to fire by now.

PETER. You've taken our mistake very kindly.

MR. MONROE. Humph! Only one I've seen you make yet, and I've been watchin' you pretty carefully ever since the other day [*suppressing a smile*] when I heard our daughter's voice comin' out of that room.

MRS. MONROE Oh! William! And you never — Oh, oh!

JUDITH. Papa!

DR. BRENT [*chuckling*]. He, he!

MRS. MONROE [*to her husband*]. And how can you overlook the scandalous way he has treated our charity.

MR. MONROE [*to* PETER]. Truth is, young man, it was this cousin Walter, who got me into the habit of all the charity business. Left his money for me to run a hospital. Thought he could get into heaven, maybe, — humph! Maybe; if he left his money that way.

DR. TALBERT [*coming forward*]. But think, sir, think what great assistance you have been to Science [*pronouncing the word with reverence*].

MR. MONROE. Bosh, Talbert! Bosh! If science's any good, it don't need a fertilizer any

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more than medicine. Humph! You ought to know that, Talbert. We don't want hot-house scientific facts; we want cold scientific facts.

JUDITH [*animated*]. Oh, Papa! That sounds just like Peter.

MR. MONROE. Does it, my dear, does it? You mean I'm not an old fool, eh?

DR. TALBERT [*coming in again*]. But, — but, Mr. Monroe, we must take care of the poor.

MR. MONROE. Bah, Talbert! The poor are better able to take care of 'emselves than you or I, if you give 'em a chance and don't make slaves of 'em and don't *squeeze 'em* into factories, and foundries and foul tenements. Humph!

JUDITH [*jumping with glee*]. Peter's very words!

MR. MONROE [*turning to JUDITH*]. Eh, my dear, eh? Peter's words, my dear? Then, you should'nt leave 'em in that typewriter of yours, at home, my dear.

JUDITH [*frowning*]. The manuscript! Oh, how careless!

MR. MONROE. No harm, my dear, no harm. Been my private opinion for sometime; but lately, yes, very lately [*glancing at TALBERT*], that opinion has been endorsed, humph! quite so, quite so!

DR. TALBERT [*once more*]. Mr. Monroe, you seem to agree with Mr. Storm so well, that our charity system is no real use. How about your wife's case?

MR. MONROE. Eh, Talbert, what's that?

DR. TALBERT. And the case of Mrs. Hopkins, and of Mrs. Tracy Lawrence?

MR. MONROE [*getting the drift*]. Eh?

DR. TALBERT. So nervous and balky their

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husbands could hardly live with 'em, and I [*drawing himself up and slapping his expanded chest*], I cured 'em and made 'em fit to live with again, by getting 'em to go into charity work.

MR. MONROE [*holding up his hand*]. Ah, there Talbert. There you have done a really *great work*, Talbert, I must repeat it, you are a remarkable man. Humph! Yes, quite remarkable.

MRS. MONROE [*almost shrieking*]. William!!

MR. MONROE. And as Mr. Storm here hasn't any money [*looking at PETER and giving a wink*], think we'll have to shut St. Stephen's up — yes, shut it up, and give the city the job that should belong to it.

MRS. MONROE [*appealing to DR. TALBERT*]. Oh, Doctor! What shall I do then? What *shall* I do then?

DR. TALBERT [*losing control a little, snaps*]. Try Cleaver — maybe your appendix should be cut out.

MRS. MONROE [*losing ground*]. Oh-o! Oh-o!

DR. TALBERT [*with a hard laugh*]. Or Dr. Barker — try him. He prescribes poodle dogs [*as he stalks out of the room*] for nervous women with nothing to do, and who *can't* get charity work.

MRS. MONROE [*as she sinks into a chair, and very much like a suddenly punctured tire emits a long*]
W-h-e-e-e-e.

DR. BRENT [*starting toward the door after DR. TALBERT*]. Hadn't I better see him to his car, Peter?

PETER [*as BRENT goes out*]. And if necessary, Bobby, give it a push.

MR. MONROE [*after a moment's pause, looks gravely*]

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smiling at JUDITH, then at PETER, and again at JUDITH]. Humph! Inclined to think, my dear, you haven't made such a v-e-r-y bad choice.

JUDITH [*who looks happily at a not indifferent PETER*]. Oh, but what will Mama say?

MR. MONROE. Now we've got rid of that doctor, my dear, your mother, I think, will say what I say — [*emphatically*] yes, quite so, quite so.

MRS. MONROE [*raising her head and looking at her husband meekly*]. What is it, William?

MR. MONROE [*going to MRS. MONROE and leading her by the hand toward the door*]. That you will agree with me, my dear, Judith should be left now to complete her work.

MRS. MONROE [*submissively and with a somewhat bewildered look in the direction of JUDITH and PETER, as she is led through the door*]. Of course, William, if you think best, —

PETER [*slowly shaking his head and with a funny sidewise look at the beaming JUDITH*]. Your father doesn't know, I guess, how thoroughly you *have* completed your work.

JUDITH [*as she somehow gets very closely encircled by a pair of arms which seem to be near by, exclaims laughing*] Oh, Peter; This is what I call a working girl's triumph!

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